

CHALLENGE TO THE EMPIRE

A STUDY OF NETAJI

DR. S.C. MAIKAP



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THE HYPNOTISM Of the I.N.A has cast its spell upon us. Netaji's name is one to conjure with. His patriotism is second to none. His bravery shines through all his actions.

The greatest lesson that we can draw from Netaji's life is the way in which he infused the spirit of unity amongst his men so that they could rise above all religions and provincial barriers and shed together their blood for the common cause.

Mahatma Gandhi

Preface

THIS IS A BOOK that concerns the last war of the Indians who organised a Government and Army under Subhas Chandra Bose away from their motherland for emancipation of India from bondage. The I.N.A. including a women regiment gave a gallant fight against the mighty Imperial armies in the Second World War under the tricolour.

Objectives and dispassionate evaluation of the subject has not been attempted as yet with due weightage either in the European countries or in India itself. Netaji Bose and the I.N.A. occupy a very significant place in Indian history, and carry a philosophy of human progress. It has had a positive bearing on many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Lack of materials and scientific interpretation of the idea and action involved, still persist. My endeavour, has been, to explore new avenues and to rescue it from possible distortion.

Published sources are, now, numerous, and the most important things I have drawn upon, are the documents of the Court Martial in Red Fort, The Transfer of Power and Official Papers of the British Government. I have met and obtained recorded statements of a number of Officers of the I.N.A. and Naval Mutiny and the civilian residents of Rangoon during and after the war. I record my gratitude to them, few to mention are Capt. N.G. Roy Bardhan, Lieut. Sanban Singh Gill, Mr. Biswanath Bose, Mr. Sunil Banerjee, Ms. Protima Ghosh. I also acknowledge debt to Netaji Research Bureau and Mr. B. Shome, an ex-Revolutionary of Calcutta who has lent me some of his most prized possessions—some rare photographs.

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Dr. Freda Kretchmar, an Executive of Free India Centre and Indian Legion, Berlin, Dr. (Mrs.) E. Yorlova of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow and Mr. Amrick Singh Gill of Malaysia, a Secret Service personnel of I.N.A., for furnishing valuable informations to the author.

I have been fortunate that many friends and well-wishers have helped and encouraged me in this work. In particular, thanks are due to Raja Mahendra Pratap, Comrade Ram Kishan Ex-Chief Minister of Punjab, Poet Subhas Mukhopadhyaya, Dr. H.P. Bose, M.L.A. West Bengal, Mr. P. Debnath of Grenada, Mr. Ashoka Sen, Mr. N.K. Chatterjee, Mr. Sunil Jana in Calcutta, Mr. M.L. Maity of National Library, and Officials of the National Archives and British Council Library.

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S.C. Maikap

Sarada Villa
Santoshpur
P.O. Bidhangarh
Calcutta - 700066
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The Indo-British Relation

TO FIGHT FOR freedom is slave's privilege. The members of Indian National Army were fortunate to exercise this privilege and also the taste of freedom. Since the first time we lost our motherland to the British imperialists, we had in the "Arze Hukumat-e-Azad Hind" an independent Indian Government with a National Army and a territory though came under possession for a short time, during the Second World War. It is the edifice on which the independence of the great sub-continent of India was erected. The experience was unique. The annals of the I.N.A. and its Supreme Commander Netaji have become a real saga of an epic to inspire, not simply for their acts of heroism, to every Indian but to many people of Asia and Africa for that uncompromising attitude pertaining to their right to freedom which alone can win people's independence against all odds.

Many a great nations of the world looked down upon the Indians with contempt—some 400 millions remaining enslaved, emasculated human being under the far-flung tiny British island whose size is smaller than one of the provinces like Uttar Pradesh, and whose numerical strength did never exceed 50 millions. This appalling condition continued for centuries. The British knew the sword and sword alone which could establish their illegal occupation right and without it nothing was meaningful to them. India forgot her glorious past. The works of the Oriental Scholars, such as James Mill, William Jones, and Prinsep were followed by the archaeological explorations in the 19th century under Alexander Cunningham and especially the works of Max Mueller, Fergusson, Wilson, and English educated Indian scholars like Ramakrishan Gopal Bhandarkar and Rajendra Lal Mitra opened our eyes. These persons brought

home, to all Westernised Indians, the sudden revelation of the glory and greatness of the ancient Hindus, the Indians—a subject people then, without any status in the world. It was brought to light that as long as three thousand years prior to the advent of Jesus Christ, our great ancestors built up, a very highly advanced society in all its forms of administration—religious, economic, social and political.

The heart is stirred up with the deepest emotion when an Indian reads these lines, as addressed to an English audience by Max Mueller, the great Oriental Scholar. "If I am asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well-deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant, I should point to India. And if I were to ask to myself from what literature we, here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact, more truly human, a life not for this life only but a transfigured and eternal life—again I should point to India."

The knowledge that revealed India's past greatness imbued her people with a sense of pride and of common bond. It also brought their subsequent inter-relationship with the English people by the use of English as the medium. After the foundation of the British Empire, the Hindus, and later on the Muslims, had in them, the common basis of unity, the common historical tradition of the past heritage. The distinction between these two communities had no bearing on public life so long as either section developed a parochial national consciousness. The verdict of history is this, that the growth and development of nationalism in India formented by the British rulers to split it, widened the breach between the Hindu and Muslim communities till Indian sub-continent was finally divided into two.

The British Empire is no more there. It was of so large an expansion that no Caesar or Charlemagne had ever ruled over

such vast realm. Both the establishment and the dissolution of this Empire is a new thing in political history, a larger in dimension and more complicated process than what we find in the revolutions of France, America and Russia. It guaranteed peace and security to the ruled, and that is why, the ruling power was endured inspite of its basic foundation in tyrannies and oppressions. After the First World War, the Imperial rule in India, hitherto uncontested, was challenged by growing nationalism. But unlike the French or the Bolshevik Revolution, 'the nationalist struggle in India was a unique upheaval. "In a quarter of a century of inspired agitation and protest, its leadership had forced history's greatest empire to the decision, Attlee's party had taken: Let Britain leave India in good time rather than be driven out by the forces of history and armed rebellion."¹

In 1857, under the flag of Bahadur Shah Zaffar, the Indian soldiers at the command of Rani of Jhansi, Tantia Tope, Kunwar Singh and Nana Sahib, fought bravely against the Army of the East India Company. In spite of a series of brilliant victories, the Indians lost this great armed revolt—their first war of independence, due to absence of united stand and faulty leadership. Eventually, the result of this battle had left a great impact on both the Britishers and the Indians. The British Prosecutor General during the prosecution of Bahadur Shah admitted in the Red Fort in March, 1858, that, the upheaval of 1857 "might have been a struggle for power, for capture of power by the natives, by the expulsion from the country of a people, alien in religion, in blood, in colour, in habits, in feelings and in everything". The alien authority charged Bahadur Shah in the Court Martial with treason and waging war against the king, and 83 years later, history repeated itself in 1945, when a Court Martial was instituted in the same historic place—the Red Fort. The charge of prosecution was the same—treason and waging war against the king, and the persons prosecuted had been but three Generals of war of Indian National Army. The verdict of both the Courts in 1858 and 1946 were the same—the prisoners were guilty of all and every part of the charges

1 Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre: *Freedom at Midnight*—p. 7.

preferred against them. But history did not repeat itself exactly in every part:

The Trial court at Red Fort in 1858, exiled Bahadur Shah to Burma. The tone and temperament, the consequential effect of the Court Martial in 1945-46 was different. Major General Shah Nawaz Khan, Lt. Col. G.S. Dhillon and Lt. Col. P.K. Sahgal, former Commissioned Officers of British Indian Army fought against the British-American armed forces under their Supreme Commander Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. They waged and conducted war for the subject nation against the King-Emperor of England. And they had to be set free as revolutionary freedom fighters: India's independence was attained.

The present work as the confirmation of the above, deals with the epoch making phenomena of Indian history. This is a book on the contribution made by Indian National Army against the Anglo-American Army during the World War-II. Since the heroic past of thousands of years, India had no such experience of forming a gigantic Army organisation in the far off land with a mobilisation of as good as three million Indian residents behind. A government of Free India (Provisional) was set up and as many as nine Governments of the World accorded their recognition to it. The importance of the organisation lies both in it's strength and strategy so much so that the Allied and the Axis powers alike had to take due cognisance of the action thereby of their Governments as to the stand taken by Netaji and his Army. Formation of the Government and waging war against the mighty Britain overawed the enemy of India and roused hopes and aspirations in every heart of the Indians at home and abroad. "One British Labour newspaper, on the basis of Bose's broadcasts from Berlin, had feared that it was not opportunity knocking at our door.....It is history battering it down".²

No proper evaluation of the contemporary Indian history is possible without adequate knowledge of the profound social and political atmosphere that transformed the image of India during the first half of the 20th century in which Subhas Chandra Bose grew up. India had been invaded and conquered

2 Michael Edwardes : *The last Years of British India*—p.85

by other foreigners long before the British traders set their foot on her soil like the Normans in England and the Manchus in China. The previous invaders made themselves part of India's society and each of them had embraced the structural unity of India's social and economic life, tried to fit into it. The English rulers, on the other hand, with their base in England, created a great gulf between them and the Indians. There were two Worlds: the world of British Officials and the world of India's masses, and there was nothing common between them except a common dislike for each other. Racialism became the acknowledged creed.

The village communities, in their excellent form, were little republics having nearly every thing they wanted within themselves and almost independent of any foreign relations. It was highly conducive to their happiness and freedom. The Britishers destroyed this culture together with the village economy. The more direct attack was thrust with the introduction of the landlordism. This system created new problems of communalism—the Hindu-Muslim disunity in India's body politic. The British rule, thus consolidated itself with the co-operation of the newly created classes of vested interests.

In the next place, the expansion of the Empire required a powerful Indian Army. The Army consisted of the English and the Indians, but officered exclusively by the Englishmen. 'Next to the grand counterpoise of a sufficient European force', writes Jawaharlal Nehru, 'comes the counterpoise of natives against natives.....The Field Army (Chiefly Indian) was meant for service abroad and it took part in numerous British imperial wars and expeditions, India always bearing the cost. Steps were taken to segregate Indian troops from the rest of the population. Thus India had to bear the cost of her own conquest, and then of her transfer (or sale) from the East India company to the British Crown, for the extension of the British Empire to Burma and elsewhere, for expedition to Africa, Persia etc., and for her defence, against Indians themselves.....'³.

3 Jawaharlal Nehru : *The Discovery of India*—p.305

Against this misrule of the British islanders, against this colonial oppressive and imperialist administration, the agitation on constitutional methods had no impact whatsoever. Sporadic outbursts by means of bombs and revolvers, resorted to by individuals or revolutionary organisations, had been subdued with repression and brutality of every measure. Sri Aurobindo Ghosh and Swami Vivekananda always thought about the freedom of India through an armed revolution. Swamiji left the job what he could not directly do, to Sister Nivedita. It is evident, Swamiji said to Sister Christine that for dislodging the foreign rule he tried to organise the rulers of the Native States, and with that end in view, he befriended Sir H. Maxim, the manufacturer of rifles and guns but the needed response from his countrymen was not there. That Vivekananda never directly involved himself with politics, he inspired youngmen for launching an armed revolution against the British rule is evident. He was not happy with the ways of the then Indian National Congress. "That is not the way to build up patriotism anywhere", he said, "beggar's bowl has no place in a banik's (merchant's) world of machine, mammon and merchandise."

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and many others experimented through means of Non-violence, Non-Co-operation, Civil Disobedience, dialogue and discussion to persuade to offer independence, at least Dominion Status, from the alien British occupation, but of no avail. For Subhas Chandra Bose, the attainment of India's independence constituted an article of faith, and working for its accomplishment was the mission of his life. From his young age, he took a very broad view of World history and marked in Britain's attitude to India with indifference and disdain. He perceived new circumstances at home and abroad would bring about the termination of the overlordship of the country, and in his view, two main factors would change the destiny of India. In the first place, the awakening of the people brought about by a long line of illustrious leaders like Gandhi, and secondly, by externally created international situation as it developed since the First World War. Bose took into account these two factors reaching to the culminating point during World War II resulting in the collapse of the British Empire and near attainment of

Indian independence: It, however, did not escape his notice of the benefit enjoyed by India in the early part of the British rule, but with the passage of time, the grievous lapses and failures far outweighed the welfare of the people of the country. He also envisioned, India having acquired her authority to function as a free nation for her own prosperity and that of the world at large. He clarified :

“.....the ultimate stage in our progress will be the severance of the British connection when that severance takes place, and there is no trace left of British dominion, we shall be in a position to determine our future relations with Great Britain through a treaty of alliance voluntarily entered into by both the parties.....once we have real self-determination, there is no reason why should not enter into the most cordial relations with the British people.....”⁴

The Second World War broke out in September 1939, Bose saw the golden opportunity before India. He said, “with every blow that she receives in Europe, the imperialist might of Britain is bound to loosen its grip in India. Let us, therefore, cease talking of saving Britain with the Empire’s help or with India’s help. India must, in this grave crisis, think of herself first.....It is for the Indian people to make an immediate demand for the transference of power to them through a Provisional National Government”. His anti-British and anti-War propaganda unnerved the British Government and unnerved Gandhi and his followers too. The Gandhian Congress, which forced Bose to resign from the Congress party, now realised that their policy of co-operation with Britain, in her peril, would not find any support of the people and would surely lead to the loss of their influence, and finally hard-pressed by their own followers, withdrew its offer of co-operation to British policy. Gandhi, who retired from the leadership on the question of conflict between his faith in non-violence and the support to the British War efforts, said, “We do not seek our independence out of Britain’s ruin.” Gandhi now resumed the authority of the Congress Party

4 Subhas Chandra Bose’s Speech as President of the 51st Session of Indian National Congress at Haripura, February, 1938.

and declared that he had decided to commence resistance to the British Government's war efforts—but not on a mass scale.

It is interesting, rather profitable, to refer to some parliamentary proceedings of Britain by which it may be evident, how some eminent public leaders of the Imperialist Britain did take interest in Bose and charged their government with vehemence.

One such is stated as follows:

"House of Lords

1st December, 1936

Mr. Subhas Bose

The Earl of Kinnoull rose to ask his Majesty's Government how long it is intended to keep Mr. Subhas Bose under house detention without trial..... This gentleman has been in prison continually, except when he came to Europe, since 1932. I want to ask the Government whether they are going to keep Mr. Bose in prison forever without trial. He is the leader of what I understand to be the most powerful party in Bengal, and it may be that after the Election, after the change-over in April next, the Congress party may desire to take office. Is he going to be released to take part in the Elections? I would ask His Majesty's Government one final question, and it is whether they have any further report as to the state of this gentleman's health. I beg to move the papers.

"The Secretary of State for India (The Marquess of Zetland): My Lords, I do not for a moment complain of the observations which the noble Earl has made with regard to the detention of Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, for indeed, there is nothing more distasteful to any administrator than to have to resort to measures of this kind. Nevertheless I am satisfied, from bitter personal experience, that in the circumstances in India it is unavoidable.....Unhappily, Mr. Bose, a man of great ability, a man possibly of genius, is a man who, whether by his own fault or by misfortune, has directed almost all his ability to destructive rather than constructive purposes....." The Earl of Kinnoull: "I appreciate at any rate his perfect frankness in saying that Mr. Subhas Bose will not be allowed to take part at the next Election except in so far as he may do so as an absentee

candidate. The noble Lord's reply has not, however, relieved my mind of the charges of Fascism or Neo-Fascism that I made. I myself would very much like to see in India no one arrested and kept in prison without being brought to trial...."⁵

Parliamentary debates in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords had been held for many years starting from 1927 till 1941, on questions of Subhas Chandra Bose. Famous public leaders of England namely Pethic-Lawrence, Lansbury, Earl Winterton, Thomas Williams, Sir S. Hoare, Lt. Col Sir Walter Smiles, Sir Reginald Craddock, Miss Wilkinson, Major General Sir Alfred Knox, Butter, Maxton, Sorensen, Gallacher, Grenfell, Amery are only a few to mention who keenly involved themselves in hot debates with regard to Bose's detention, exile, health hazard and lastly his disappearance during the Second World War. His life force, repeated incarcerations, his power of head and heart drew the illustrious men of the world nearer to his thoughts and deeds. Romain Rolland, Bertrand Russel, De Valera, Dr. Benes, Ernest Bevin, Stafford Cripps and Clement Attlee, the great minds of Europe were amazed with Bose's character. His immense capability and idealism and action, his dedication and determination highly reflected on these persons' views when he came in personal contact with them and also with the other war lords of Europe and Asia. Hugh Toye, Bose's British biographer, the noted author of *Springing Tiger*, has assessed Netaji's stature in these words: "Bose was now (1938) a man more than national stature. Abroad he ranked after Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru as an Indian politician. Within India, his personality had proved to many, the most attractive of the three. In some places his reputation rivalled that of Gandhi himself...."⁶

The British authorities who had already persecuted Bose ten times in prison and in exile within India and abroad, now finally arrested him on July 2, 1940, and decided to prosecute with the exercise of Section 38, and under Section 26 of the then Defence of India Rules. They made a mockery of justice. When bail was applied for and granted in a suit, the Magistrate confessed that

5 Nanda Mookerjee : *Subhas Chandra Bose—The British Press, Intelligence and Parliament*:—pp. 127-131.

6 Hugh Toye : *The Springing Tiger*—p.46.

his permission would necessarily remain ineffective till Bose was detained under Section 26. The Government refused to release him even when he was elected as a member to the Central Legislative Assembly during his detention. The analogy of a British M.P.'s right to attend a session in Parliament had no validity in India. Pangs of slavery!

Subhas Chandra was convinced that the British would not release him before the end of the War, and within his cell of the Presidency Jail, he came to the conclusion: "Firstly, Britain would lose the war and the British Empire would break up. Secondly, inspite of being in a precarious position, the British would not hand over power to the Indian people and the latter would have to fight for their freedom. Thirdly, India would win her independence if she played her part in the war against Britain and collaborated with those powers that were fighting Britain. The conclusion he drew for himself was that India should actively enter the field of international politics".⁷ With regard to the said final imprisonment of Bose in India, a communique despatched from Calcutta to Delhi and London may be cited :

"Secret: Addressed to Viceroy repeated to Secretary of State—Subhas Arrest and (sic). Holwell monument—'It was inevitable that, sooner or later, Bengal should produce a leader of real ability and personal character and it was equally inevitable, alas, that this leader, Subhas Chandra Bose, and the British Government in India should become the most bitter enemies'. (This is an exchange of secret notes between Lord Linlithgo, the Viceroy and J.A. Herbert, the Governor of Bengal, Dated July 4, 1940.

The genesis of Bose's next venture—the colossal venture of the implacable foe of the British Empire were often traced in his speeches to audience in South East Asia: "What new method should be adopted. Youngmen were doing their bit with bombs and revolvers. We got into touch with these young revolutionaries. I knew their strength. They were real revolutionaries of high spirit. But their strength and sacrifice were not enough to achieve complete independence for our

7 Subhas Chandra Bose—*Netaji Collected works* : Vol. II—p. 386.

Motherland" To Bose, Civil Disobedience was not suffice, what India needed was the military support to break through the crust of the British power. Though he was hopeful of Axis victory, alike most of the men all over the world, he apprehended, Hitler might not give unconditional assistance to India. Russia, which had experienced the pains of her own revolution, might not fail to realise India's need. 'Atlast', he says, 'I decided myself to get out of India'. Subhas Chandra Bose resorted to Fast Unto Death in the Presidency Jail in Calcutta.

"Government are determined to hold me in prison by brute force. I say in reply—"Release me or I shall refuse to live—and it is for me to decide whether I choose to live or to die.....It's through suffering and sacrifice alone that a cause can flourish and prosper, and in every age and clime the eternal law prevails—"the blood of the martyr is the seed of the church." In this mortal world, everything perishes and will perish—but ideas, ideals and dreams do not.....No idea has ever fulfilled itself in this world except through an ordeal of suffering and sacrifice. To my countrymen I say— 'Forget not that the greatest curse for a man is to remain a slave. Forget not that the greatest crime is to compromise with injustice and wrong. Remember the eternal law—you must give life if you want to get it..... I shall commence my fast on November 29, 1940".

He continued in his characteristic style and his views on the 'cause'—Freedom and Truth, in the following form: "As St. Paul said, 'We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spirited wickedness in the high places. 'Our cause is the cause of Freedom and truth and as sure as day following night, that cause will ultimately prevail. Our bodies may fall and perish but with faith undiminished and will unconquerable, triumph will be ours. It is, however, for providence to ordain who of us should live to witness the consummation of all our efforts and labours, and for myself, I am content to live my life and leave the rest to destiny".

The eloquent, the earth shaking moral protest did not fail, and the uproar of his countrymen moved the Government. Having resisted forcible feeding, Bose had to be released and home

interned. Most carefully he conceived and cleverly executed his escape from India to Europe and eventual trips from Europe to Asian theatres of war. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose the prodigious child of Revolution, left his Motherland on the dead of night of January 17, 1941, for the quest of freedom of Mother India.

Netaji Bose's Strategy

"IT IS POSSIBLE that Netaji is the last of the Romans", said Dilip Kumar Roy, Bose's friend and the Yogi, "and so we may nevermore be able to recapture the thrill of worshipping our motherland as a deified Priestess of the Spirit. If so, I for one can only be sorry, for I, too, am fully persuaded that India a '*Punya Bhumi*'. Anyhow, this is a mystical thrill born of the soul's vision which Netaji believed to be true for all times. Time and time again would he pour out his heart's raptures.... not only extolling her past greatness, but dreaming of the India to be which (he would prophesy) must far outshine even all her past glory."

The incredible impact of his tremendous personality is that he refused to accept defeat under any situation. To this marvellous trait of character of his, was added a mystic magnetism when he attained the zenith of his fame in South East Asia to be acclaimed by millions of Indians and other nationalities as 'Netaji', the great leader of the Nation. Perhaps no other epithet be more fitting, no other authority be more universal. Historically, however, the epithet has its genesis on the soil of Germany. This authority, the lustre of personality was writ large on his native ingredients and clung to him all his life. It stood him in good stead even in the inconceivable situations. But nowhere, were the odds so formidable against him as they were in Berlin, the headquarters of Adolf Hitler.

It may be questioned as to why Bose was persuaded to be bound for Berlin. Because Stalin did not agree, the Russian Ambassador did not meet Bose in Kabul, and Netaji gambled recklessly with faith in his burning patriotism as his only asset.

1 Dilip Kumar Roy: *Netaji The Man: Reminiscence*—p.206.

It is presumed, Russia with a secret non-aggression alliance with England, thought it undesirable to incur their wrath by giving armed help to Bose for India's emancipation. "But when all is said and done", writes Dilip Kumar Roy, "it was his fiery personality which gave him the ring of authority which convinced even the haughty Hitler that it would be worthwhile to befriend the rebel. And Hitler was so deeply impressed by him that he agreed finally to delete the derogatory remarks he had made about India in his book *Mein Kampf*, following a representation by Subhas Bose". But his was not all a smooth sailing.

If Netaji would be certain, that he could take the struggle to a more active stage by working within his own country, while the World War was going on, he would not have left India at a critical hour. During his sojourn in Europe in 1941-43, he repeatedly underlined in his speeches the basic reasons of his hazardous mission to Europe. "He used to state repeatedly and with great emphasis", says Alexander Werth, "while in Europe that it was national interest alone which brought Britain into war with Germany despite the policy that Hitler followed over a long period of time with great care to avoid an armed conflict with Britain. The same factor determined Britain's active association with the Soviet Union at a later stage of the War. Time and again in History, Bose asserted, national or State interests have been given the priority....."². Netaji reached to such a position when it was no longer feasible for him to further the struggle for his country's freedom with the means and methods available within India, he undertook the daring adventure and got out of the British Indian frontier.

While in Germany, Bose came to be called first as 'Netaji' which I would deal a little later. During this period, 1941 to early '43, he gave serious thought to various problems and their remedies. They deserve to be studied with attention in India even today. Sympathetic and generous consideration of the non-majority religious groups in India, a common national

2 Dr. Alexander Werth: An Assessment of Netaji's policy and co-operation with the Axis Powers during World War-II (Paper presented at Netaji Bhawan, Calcutta on January 23, 1973): Dr. Werth worked for German Foreign Office in the Special Division for India and assisted Netaji during World War-II.

language for the satisfactory integration, Planning Committee to work on socialist line had been the salient features of his consideration. "He placed much weight on effective defence force after independence and also setting up a national defence industry for turning out defence equipment. To those familiar with his ideas in this regard, the importance he gave to India possessing a good navy is no secret even though this might have at the time caused some surprise. Bose took well into account the bigger role the airforce and the navy would play in the defence.....projecting Netaji's ideas into the present, the sensational 'Blitz War' in East Bengal of 1971, would never have been possible without a strong Indian Navy, planned, built up and used according to the present geographical situation and strategic needs"³.

Perhaps, the most significant item of his thought was focussed on an international complexity, which became a reality much later. During the War, when he was in Europe, he was seriously occupied with the position of the Indians and those of the Indian origin in Africa, especially those in South Africa. He, of course, did not constitute the idea that a very weak South Africa would be born out of the War, but could foresee the hated 'apartheid'. He contemplated, independent India absorbing a good number of Indians repatriated from Africa.

The situation in 1939 turned the tide of the Treaty of Versailles of 1919 in the opposite direction of history. The world, Britain in particular, was bewildered when Germany, the arch enemy of communism, succeeded in signing a non-aggression pact with Russia. Humanity cannot visualise the fate of the world today if Hitler and Stalin had been able to remain true to their pact. This pact was a great blow to the Anglo-French-American allied diplomacy, and Hitler stabilised his position by his checkmate to Western Powers. Over three years of continued defeats Britain was exhausted beyond any hope of recovery. Even on the fourth year, the Anglo-American forces were almost nowhere on the continent to carry the War into Germany.

Bereft of all allies except America, Britain was almost reduced to a third-rate power, and for her survival, she was to exhaust

3 Ibid.

to the extreme, the man and material of India—the brightest jewel on her crown. India's historic role at this juncture, therefore, was to take help of Britain's enemies, and wrest Freedom. By the end of 1940, Germany was the master of the situation, her war front had already extended considerably and Italy joined her. 'Netaji was eager to fight the British with any means at his disposal. To him Britain was the enemy, and he did not care who were his allies in the fight. In this way', observes Prof. Stevenson of Canada, 'he was similar to Churchill in determination. Churchill once made famous quip about making a favourable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons should the Devil make available his services against Hitler. Bose could equally well have made a similar reference, turned in the opposite direction. To the British, Bose was a traitor, to the Indians he was a hero.....on July 9, 1981, the red upholstered chair that he used in Rangoon as president of the Provisional Government of India was installed in the Red Fort in New Delhi, and scenes of oriental military splendour. Netaji's chair, beside which is his photograph in uniform, can be viewed in a small room, up two flights of stairs, in the entrance portico facing the Diwan-i-Am.'⁴ And Netaji's sword which had been salvaged, was received with honour by no other dignitary than Dr. Zakir Hussain, President of the Indian Republic, and well preserved as the symbol of valour and prowess of India. The adjunct used by British Premier Churchill so as to blacken Netaji's image is fittingly applicable to Mr. Churchill himself when the thing is seen and adjudged through the lens of an Indian.

At the beginning of 1941, Germany got interested in Indian affairs on account of two reasons namely: (1) an increasing number of Indian exiles had been drifting into Germany: (2) a large number of Indians serving in the British Indian Army were being brought to Germany as War prisoners from North Africa. The Germans realised that these people were fundamentally anti-British in their attitude. Then with the sudden appearance of Bose in Germany, the German military leaders and the high officials in Foreign Office became aware of a new situation.

4 Richard Stevenson: *Bengal Tiger and British Lion*—pp. 79 and 82.

Besides, with Bose's arrival in Berlin, the Press and the Radio authorities along with the High Command of the Wehrmacht (Army Headquarters) began to study the problem. Very shortly, an inner circle namely 'Working Group India', was established in the Information Department of the German Foreign Office.

Netaji Bose arrived in Berlin on April 3, and as vigorously an activist he was, right on April 9, he submitted a Secret Memorandum to the German Government delineating his plan for co-operation between the Axis powers and India. 'Since the War began', he explained, 'Great Britain has not relaxed her political and economic grip over India in spite of the manifold defeats she has suffered at the hands of Germany. To us in India, it is therefore crystal clear that as the British Empire collapses increasingly, Great Britain will try to hold on to India more and more and she will do so till the very last. It is also clear from British policy in India at that time that if the British Empire somehow survives this War, Great Britain will endeavour to recover her strength by exploiting the rich resources of India so that she may be able to challenge the 'New Order' after some years.....In order to establish full co-operation between the Axis powers and India for the achievement of the common objectives of defeating Great Britain, the following plan is being proposed. It will entail work in Europe, in Afghanistan, in the Independent Tribal Territory lying between Afghanistan and India' and last but not least, in India'⁵

In the question of the military position in India Bose's 'Explanatory Note', was: 'The attitude of the Indian people which was hostile to Great Britain at the beginning of the War has been greatly embittered as a result of the imprisonment of most of the leaders and thousands of their followers in every province in India. As there is no possibility of any change in Britain's policy in India while the War lasts, it is certain that the hatred of the people towards British domination will become deeper and deeper as the days roll by. England is thus holding India by the sword at the present time. But even from the

5 Memorandum to the German Government, 1941 (Secret Memorandum of Subhas Chandra Bose, Berlin, of April, 1941).

military point of view, the British position is not as strong as it appears from the outside.....

'The full strength of the army in India, including auxiliaries like the armed police and territorials is approximately 2,50,000. Since the beginning of the War, about 100,000 men were sent out on service abroad, i.e. to the Near East, Middle East and Far East. This deficiency was recouped by an additional recruitment of 100,000 which it took the British Government 15 months to secure. It is now the plan of the Government to recruit an additional force of 500,000 for service during the War time, but it is extremely doubtful if the Government will be able to raise even a part of this force. Out of this total figure of 2,50,000 the British troops including auxiliaries, number 70,000. The Indian troops number about 1,80,000 but they are officered by the British.'

In his 'Explanatory Note' No. 7 i.e. the importance for India of Japanese Foreign policy in the Far East, Bose stressed:-

'The overthrow of British power in India, can in its last stages, be materially assisted by Japanese foreign policy in the East.....it appears more than certain that the East India and Far Eastern squadrons of the British navy will, under the present circumstances, be no match for the Japanese navy. And even if America comes to the rescue of the British navy, a Japanese victory could still be hoped for. A defeat of the British navy in the Far East including the smashing up of the Singapore base, will automatically weaken the British military strength and prestige in India. India is, therefore, intensely interested in the developments in the Far East. And since Japanese expansion southwards necessitates a prior agreement between Soviet Union and Japan, India is greatly interested in a pact which will, on the one hand, expedite a settlement of the China Affair and will, on the other, enable Japan to move freely and confidently towards the South'.⁶

In fact, Germany had shown not much interest in the political affairs of India, obviously on consideration that India was the affair of England. This attitude was exhibited during Hitler's regime as he did not like it to spoil his relations with Great

⁶ Ibid.

Britain. During the course of the Second World War, Hitler always expressed in the coming to terms with England, though failed. Still, the German 'Operation Dunkirk' gives a clear evidence of Hitler's sympathy for Britain. Between May and June 1941, 3,00,000 British troops who fell at the hands of German army were allowed to be embarked from Dunkirk because Hitler refused to allow his victorious forces to mop up the routed Britons. With a very strong Air Force, well-equipped Navy and the great Army, and had Hitler wished, not a single English soldier would have ever reached England alive. But it was not to be. It was therefore, very tough to change this pro-British attitude of Hitler into a friendly gesture towards India which was in direct opposition to England.

We must agree again to the fact that Germany wanted foreign co-operation of every character that she could directly or indirectly weaken her enemy's war machine. India happened to be an important bastion and the biggest reservoir of British supplies of men and material, and India had been pushed into War without the consent of the people. Therefore Germany would not like to dispose Bose totally or allow his proposals to lapse.⁷

In the Memorandum Bose laid down the most important items of his project for the Special India Dèpartment of the Foreign Office to take up, were the establishment of Free India Centre, creation of Indian Legion (not included in the first Memorandum but submitted in the reminder), Radio Broadcasts programme. Behind the idea of Legion, Bose's objective was great though seemed to be very difficult to achieve, as it was the direct concern of the Wehrmacht—the all powerful German Army. After many months of waiting and so many disappointments on the part of Bose, the German Government agreed to offer unconditional and all-out co-operation. Netaji counted upon the help of the Indians staying in Germany. All of the young men joined the works with youthful enthusiasm and deep respect for the great leader, and the latter got the best out of them by using his moral influence coupled with his own self-discipline and magnetic personality.

7 N.G. Ganpuley: *Netaji In Germany*—p. 34.

This time, Netaji contemplated that it need not be passive resistance but active and positive defence of India's freedom and interest. He had the ambitious original conception to train Indian officers in Germany which idea led to the birth of the I.N.A. "The intellectual basis for the growth and success of the Legion", stated Dr. Adalbert Seifriz, on August 14, 1959, "was created by Subhas Bose. Repeatedly he explained to his compatriots and the German personnel his ideas about the Legion and their future task in free India. He was very anxious to see preserved in the Legion traditions of the cultural and political past of his country. With a feeling, fine and noble, he did his utmost to banish the danger of losing the cultural roots of his Legionaries. To many a man Subhas Bose seemed to be a reserved and contemplative personality. But when he stood in front of the Legion and expressed his ideas for a free India in detail, then the fire of a fighter and a revolutionary could be felt....."⁸.

Subhas Chandra built up an organisation something between an official mission and a provisional government. After prolonged conversations Netaji had with Secretary of State, Kepler, he could devote himself more freely to the work according to his own wish and give it the shape he wanted to. The Provisional Government of Free India, which was originally known in Europe as the Free India Centre, received regular advances in the form of loans from German Government which were to be paid when the Government of Free India would be installed in Delhi. In fact, Subhas Chandra Bose took these loans very seriously. In 1944, through the German Ambassador in Tokyo and with the knowledge of the Japanese Government he repaid half a million yen as the first instalment in payment of the loans which the Germans had advanced to the Free India Centre in Berlin⁹.

8 Dr. Adalbert Seifriz's Preface to the book *Netaji in Germany* by N.G. Ganpuley. (Dr. Seifriz was a German Military Officer in charge of the Indian Legion later on, President of the Labour Office in Stuttgart. He has established Indo-German Society, and visited India twice after the Second World War).

9 Dr. Alexander Werth: *Planning for Revolution 1941-1943*: Bose's personal allowance was fixed at £800 per month. The monthly grant of the F.I.C., which was £ 1,200 in 1941 rose to £ 3,200 in 1944. The expenses on the Legion were in addition to these grants. It was a personal debt of honour to Bose and the Indian Nation was not made responsible for its reimbursement—N.G. Ganpuley.

The Free India Centre was attributed different activities, such as (i) Editing of all the broadcasts of 'Azad Hind Radio', the 'National Congress Radio' and the 'Azad Muslim Radio' (ii) Assessment of German news material; (iii) Editing the periodical *Azad Hind* which appeared regularly with a circulation of 5,000 copies (iv) looking after the entire Indian community in Germany (v) Co-ordination of activities of all branches of the Free India Centre outside Germany, i.e. in France and Italy: and above all (vi) creating a centre of co-ordination with massive organisation of overseas Indians in South-East Asia.

The Free India Centre had started only with a handful of Indians among whom were Habibur Rahman, N.G. Ganpuley, N.G. Swamy and M.R. Vyas. A.C.N. Nambiar, a famous Indian journalist then working in Central Europe for about two decades, joined Netaji in the beginning of 1942 and became the Deputy Leader. On November 2, 1941, the Centre was ceremonially inaugurated. The Azad Hind movement received its own standard and insignia, viz., the Congress tricolour with the outline of the springing tiger embossed on it. The subjects embodied in the special four resolutions covered a wider field and will ever go down in history as outstanding in our national life. These are with regard to, (1) the war cry—"Jai Hind". This is for the first time in modern Indian history, a common and universal Indian form of greeting, and 'war cry' introduced and accepted before, during and after India's independence. (2) Bose received the appellation of "Netaji"—which combined a sense of great affection and respect at par with the appellation of 'Mahatma' and 'Gurudeva'—which India had conferred on Gandhiji and Rabindranath Tagore. (3) The third thing of national and international importance which was considered at the Free India Centre was the choice of the very impressive National Anthem—"Jana Gana Mana Adhinayak", the tune and temperament of which gives us always fresh life to unite and defend our liberty and uphold the great national honour. "This National Anthem was for the first time played and sung with full orchestra accompaniment on the occasion of the opening ceremony of Indo-German Cultural Society in Hamburg in 1942 and a gramophone record made of the same on that occasion

may be still available. It was also on this important and historic occasion that, for the first time, the Indian National Flag fluttered proudly in a foreign country, side by side with the National Flag of that country"¹⁰. With regard to the fourth resolution, the national language, as referred, to make it easy for people of different parts of the Indian sub-continent and for foreigners to learn, was "Hindustani", our national language. Netaji most judiciously introduced it to be written in Roman script as the official language.

The history of India bears the testimony, how the imagination and action of one man, has given birth to things of supreme importance for the posterity to be proud of, and this thought and action had originated in a far distant land many thousand miles away from India.

On an auspicious day in November 1941, the Azad Hind Radio opened with an inaugural speech by Netaji himself. This was an exceptionally solemn occasion in which Subhas Chandra was supposed to have come out from his grave to inform his countrymen that absolutely contrary to the mischievous propaganda spread by the British agents about his death, he was alive and fighting for the cause of India's liberation. The Azad Hind Radio broadcasts towards India were projected through the most powerful radio channel of Huizen in Holland. His first radio broadcast was so much sensitive, so much surcharged with deep emotion that, his mental vision could see before him those famished faces, half-starved, half-naked bodies of millions of his countrymen. He struck sometimes personal notes: "My whole life is one long persistent, uncompromising struggle against British imperialism and is the best guarantee of my bona fides".

Though most of the plans and projects, Bose submitted for German co-operation, as stated above, Ribbentrop, Germany's Foreign Minister, considered premature of any public declaration on the part of Axis powers about the Independence of India. Hitler did not receive Bose for about one year to avoid any definite commitment on the subject. This seemed to be based on the ground that Germany had undergone secret

10 N.G. Ganpuley: *Netaji in Germany*—pp. 42-44.

negotiation with Russia at the end of 1940 in which India had been regarded as part of the Russian sphere of influence when Britain collapsed. Germany was not at war with Russia until June 22, 1941 and, therefore unwilling to undertake any contrary public commitment. Bose's association with the German Government was realistic in nature. The motive behind his movement was to exploit the international situation in the interest of India—he was never inspired by Nazi philosophy. Walter Schellenberg, the Chief of AMT VI—the Foreign Political Information Service of the then Germany, observes:

"One day in March 1942, Johnke came to see me on his return from a trip to Switzerland. S. Chandra Bose, one of the leaders of the Indian Nationalist Movement, who at that time wielded considerable influence in India was staying in Berlin. The Japanese were trying to ingratiate themselves with Bose, so of course I was interested in getting Johnke's opinion in the situation.....Bose's outstanding intelligence and his mastery of modern propaganda methods had made a deep impression on Himmler and we were therefore considering whether we should not shift our support to him. When I mentioned Bose's name to Johnke he at once gave me a warning. He said he knew that Bose lived and studied in Moscow for a considerable time and that he had established close relations with the Cominform. In my own dealings with Bose I had time and time again come across indications of the influence of Moscow's teachings in the way questions and answers were developed dialectically with a set of rules.....After he had left Berlin I did not fail to disclose my misgivings about him to the Japanese there; they insisted, however, that they could make good use of a man of his calibre in Japan"¹¹.

Netaji's movements in Berlin were being watched by the German Secret Servicemen. A Gestapo Officer was placed in the Hotel Splendid where he was provided with an apartment to live in. Afterwards when he was shifted to a house in Sophienstrasse, it was detected that the butler, called Bloch, who had been supplied to Netaji for his service, was also a

11 *The Schellenberg Memoirs*, edited and translated by Louis Hogen, London 1956 Chap. XXVII pp. 298-299.

Gestapo Agent. "He (Netaji) was so much under surveillance that he began jotting down his engagements in his diary in Bengali because he told me (Dr. Girija Mookerjee) that his diary and suitcases were periodically searched by one"¹². Although it was agreed that the German Government would not resort to any censorship, it is on record that, the Foreign Ministry took a decision secretly to exercise censorship on radio broadcast by playing the records without any knowledge of Netaji. On December 30, 1941, in a special meeting of the Ministry of Propaganda, attended by Dr. Goebbels and his high officials of the Foreign office and of the Radio section, it was decided to hold censorship with utmost care so that Bose might not realise it. Dr. Goebbel's Diary also testifies that he used to keep personal watch on Bose's Radio broadcasts, which he carried on most tactfully without any commendation or condemnation of Nazism.¹³ Nevertheless, Netaji stood granite. He commented one day face to face to his Nazi colleague:

"For the sake of my country, I have risked my neck to come to Germany. For the same reason I am prepared to risk my neck to return to India if I cannot achieve my purpose. The British CID is very efficient and just as I escaped in spite of it, I shall escape your Gestapo also."

The German officials who had never been accustomed with such language, now could estimate the man who they were dealing with. Hitler sanctioned all his demands, gave him the status of the Head of a free state and the fullest diplomatic immunity. In spite of that, it may not escape our eyes, that Bose, "was at that time under personal 'protection' of the German Foreign Ministry. So, Col. Yamamoto, the Japanese military attache in Berlin who received a cable from Tokyo Headquarters" to make a direct observation of a man named Bose and report, needed official permission to meet Bose. He (Ambassador Oshima in Berlin) had a feeling that the German Foreign Ministry would not let Bose go in any case. They were guarding Bose like a tiger cub. His propaganda broadcasts were

12 "Netaji and Hitler"—Article by Dr. Girija K. Mookerjee (Associate of Netaji and speaker in English for Azad Hind Radio in Berlin). —*The Sunday Statesman*, February 15, 1973.

13 Nanda Mookerjee: *Netaji Through German Lens*—p. 86.

judged to be affecting India and Britain. Furthermore, in the event of a German defeat, Bose would be valuable for bargaining purposes, since Britain would be anxious to get hold of Bose....."¹⁴.

Besides, it has come to light that Adam Von Trott who rendered great help and enabled Bose to carry out his freedom struggle in Germany, was brutally executed on charge of conspiracy against Hitler. It is a living example as to the situation in which Netaji worked. In this regard, a letter addressed to the writer in 1986 by an officer of the 'Special Department, India' is revealing. It is as follows:

Dr. Freda Kretschmar Mookerjee
5300 Bonn 2
West Germany
26.12.1986

Dear Dr. Maikap,

.....Those who have known the Berlin scene have witnessed many things but due to the non-interest of the official Indian side and constraint of those who were in there will have not much change of the picture we have until now.....Anyhow, if some anti-Bengali and not very instructed clerks of the academic fields try to blacken the picture of the Bose movements abroad, tell them to go and ask permission in the Imperial War Museum in London to see the film how Dr. Von Trott* (who was the sponsor of the Indian struggle during the critical times in Berlin) was hanged feet upwards after the most brutal and inhuman treatment. This sort of fate was hanging over everybody's head who collaborated with Bose as the India Office served in two ways—(a) to help India without regard of German interests and (b) as a cover for the German resistance against Nazism. I wanted to be in India this month.....

Sincerely Yours,

Sd. F.K. Mookerjee

14 Joyce Lebra (University of Colorado, U.S.A.)—'Bose's Influence on the Formulation of Japanese Policy toward India and the I.N.A.' International Netaji Seminar—pp. 318-319.

During this War situation in Europe and Bose's involvement therein with his own strategy, we see that fitting to his programme of action, the Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi in India turned down the British Proposal of Dominion Status. "Why," Gandhi is reported to have asked, "accept a post-dated cheque on a bank that was obviously falling? Far better to save their energy and reputations for negotiations with the Japanese". Miss Kurshed Naoroji (grand daughter of Dadabhai Naoroji, the first Indian member of the British House of Commons), was a devout and constant disciple of Gandhiji and a resident of *Wardha ashrama*. On June 5, 1942, she "repeated her statement of yesterday", writes Louis Fischer, (American publicist): "If Bose (Subhas Chandra Bose, president of Congress in 1938, who escaped from India after the beginning of the War and took up residence in Germany, whence he broadcast against British rule) entered India as the head of an Indian army, he could rally the whole country"¹⁵.

Louis Fischer's conversation with Gandhiji on the question of Subhas Chandra is of great significance. We may read if from Fischer's diary, dated June 6, 1942: "I told Gandhi that I was rather shocked when I heard that he had sent a telegram of condolence to Bose's mother on the receipt of the report, since proved false, that Bose had died in an airplane accident. Gandhi asked, 'because I had responded to news that proved to be false?' 'No', I said, 'but that you regretted the passing of a man who went to Fascist Germany and identified himself with it.' 'I did it', Gandhi asserted, 'because I regard Bose as a patriot of patriots.....I have often opposed Bose. Twice I kept him from becoming president of Congress. Finally he did become president, although my views often differed from his. But suppose he had gone to Russia or to America to ask aid for India. Would that have made it better?'"¹⁶.

The British authorities had been struck down with this unusual mentality of Gandhi— a crystal and clear mastervoice of the anti-British attitude which had always been proclaimed by Subhas Bose. When Fischer asked Gandhiji in July 1942, why

15 Louis Fischer—*A Week with Gandhi* (London, George Allen Unwin Ltd., 1943) pp. 28-29.

16 Ibid. p. 57.

he was so impatient to launch the 'Quit India' movement against the British, Gandhiji advised Fischer, "Go and ask Subhas".

Netaji met Hitler on 29th May, in the year 1942. Some of the salient points of their conversation that may arouse the interest of scholars might be had from the following:

"To start with, Netaji began the conversation with the customary assurance that, that was a very significant day for him when he made the acquaintance of the great leader of the German people and an old revolutionary. Dr. Alexander Werth, who worked for the German Foreign Office in Special Division for India has given an account of the conference. Dr. Von Trott acted as the interpreter for Bose. Netaji first requested Hitler to explain what exactly meant by the derogatory remark¹⁶, that he had made about India in his autobiography, *Mein Kampf*. It seemed, Hitler observed silence and refused point blank to discuss the question. Then on the question of whether the German Government would be inclined to make the declaration so often asked for by Netaji on India's Independence, Hitler led Bose to a map of the world and pointed out to him how far the German front was from the Indian Frontier. It was because of this Hitler said, that an immediate declaration of India's right to self-determination could not be of any practical value. The interview ended, in fact, in a total failure. It also ended almost dramatically. For, as it was reported by Adam von Trott, at the end of conversation Hitler asked Bose how and what practical action he would take when the situation seemed to be so desperately unfavourable for India. On hearing this remark, Subhas Bose lost his patience and told Von Trott in English: "Please tell his excellency that I have been in politics all my life and that I do not need advice from anyone"¹⁷.

** "England will never lose India unless she admits racial disruption in the machinery of her administration (which at present is entirely out of the question in India) or unless she is overcome by the sword of some powerful enemy. But Indian risings will never bring this about. We Germans have had sufficient experiences to know how hard it is to coerce England. And, apart from all this, I as a German would far rather see India under British domination than under that of any other nation".—Adolf Hitler. *Mein Kampf*—p. 536.

17 Dr. Werth: *Planning for Revolution: A Beacon Across Asia*—pp. 138-139.

The German view as referred to above, materially varies from that of Mr. Vyas, an active participant of Netaji in Germany. Vyas records that, Hitler promised Bose to reformulate his statements on India (delete the derogatory remarks against India) in later editions of his *Mein Kampf*. He also promised to support Indian struggle for freedom in every possible way. Vyas observes: "When he (Netaji) thought that talks had concluded, Hitler stood up and led him to one of the maps, which decorated his rather small conference room. It was a world map. He drew his finger across the gaps between the most advanced German post in Russia and India and then put his finger on the Indo-Burmese border. It was Hitler, the realist, speaking. There the Japanese were already at India's borders, but could he ever cover that long distance ? he seemed to ask. To Netaji, a man of quick grasp, it was quite clear, about what Hitler wanted to convey by his gesture. It was an evident confession by the German dictator that if Netaji wanted to realize his cherished dream, he would have to go to Burma and not be tied up in Germany. Sensing the question which his gesture would raise in Netaji's mind, Hitler instantly added : "Your Excellency, be assured, my Government will always stand by the word of independence for your country given by me under all circumstances. He clearly implied that, if necessary, he would resist his ally Japan on the question of India's right to complete independence"¹⁸. The impression, Netaji had made in Berlin and on Hitler was of such great height that Hitler with his superiority complex of Nordic race and who was seldom known to have changed his views, agreed to delete derogatory remarks, he had made about India in his autobiography.

As already referred, the Germans were not very much interested in the beginning on the matter of India or His Excellency 'Orlando Mazzotta' about the Indian revolutionary fugitive Subhas Chandra Bose. The Explosive development in the East Asia made Germany aware of the vital importance of India in the final outcome of the War. Then the German Government became keen in taking too much interest in Bose. This development 'both pleased and frightened Subhas. He

18 Walter Leifer—*India and the Germans*—pp. 298-299.

wanted to keep his own liberty of action, and he did not want to be branded a pro-Nazi. That was why he insisted that the Azad Hind Sangha (Free India Centre) which came into being in April 1942, should be an entirely Indian organisation, free to discuss and plan things without any interference from the German authorities. He succeeded eventually in obtaining a promise to this effect from the Germans...thus served the purpose of focussing our entire energy on work which concerned us and India alone.....It was not any political organisation subscribing to any creed:

Neither the Soviet Russia, nor the German Government, nor the United States of America bore any idea of considering for self-determination of India except their national interest. Notwithstanding their psychological sympathy, the democratic ideals in the Atlantic Charter by England and America, or revolutionary fervour of Russia and Germany, none of them gave any thought to the question of freedom of the Indian people. Bose understood well, it is the militarist authority the question, that decides the issues of the world. It is no wonder that no national minded Indian leader should have thought of organising and possessing a moderate National Army. Passive resistance of Gandhiji, Bose already concluded, would not be an effective weapon and ultimate solution. The idea of training the Indian youth in military science had been a cherished idea of his since very long. He saw the need of a disciplined, well organised organ. And it is the genius of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, that we see the seed of Indian National Army germinated as Indian Legion on the soil of a foreign country in Europe.

* Girija Mukerjee: *This Europe*

Birth of I.N.A.

MANY GREAT EVENTS of human progress have their origin in simple beginning. When we take a bird's eye view of the great panorama of history, what strikes us is the rise and fall of great empires. Sometimes it takes shape from insignificant events. While in Berlin, Subhas Bose read one day about some half a dozen Indian prisoners of war at the hand of Germany, were brought to the B.B.C. and other Radio Stations. Every day they were brought to the German Officer to listen and translate the programmes in Hindustani and sent back to their barracks escorted by sentry, and in return of this service, they used to receive a little better food and some other petty amenities. Bose talked to them about their captivity and their present life. He could not tolerate such fine materials rotting in the prisoners' camp. His militant instincts aroused.

At the time there were about 10,000 Indian Prisoners of War in the Annaberg camp, and having come to know all about it, he resolved to see the well-built healthy youths of India wasted in the foreign country. They must be utilised in the service of his mother country. And he started negotiating with the German Foreign Office. A bold plan he put up for training the Indian Youths, the prisoners and for a national militia—Indian Legion. On December 25, 1941, "he blessed the Legion, the first of its kind in the history of the struggle for Indian freedom. One could never have dreamt of raising a trained military force of this type even in India under the British rule although many a national leader would have been glad to lead one. With a heavy heart Netaji took leave of this first batch of volunteers of this Legion and christened this organisation as Azad Hind Fauj. Tears of joy stood in his eyes. It was the fulfilment of his long—cherished desire, namely, to form an Indian National Army....."¹.

1 N.G. Ganpuley: *Netaji in Germany*—p. 73.

With the initiation of the Indian Legion, Netaji worked tirelessly and established personal contact with Walter Harbich, a Cavalry Officer in the High Command of the German Army (Wehrmacht). In reality, there was already in 1940 a German Indian commando unit with an idea for their deployment in the troubled area of the North West Frontier Province in India. As desired by Netaji, Walter Harbich held a detailed discussion with him in Hotel Excelsior, the then residence of Bose. Netaji observed in this Indo-German Commando Group, a possibility of a different kind of military training for Indian soldiers such as radio transmission, sabotage techniques, parachute landing, mountain warfare, collection of military intelligence etc. He paid regular visits to the barracks of Mseritz in the area of Frankfurt and Dr. Adalbert Seifriz, another high ranking officer offered his valuable co-operation to Netaji defending the interests of the Indian Legion against the suspects of the Foreign Department Officials. Later on, the Indian Commando Group was merged with the Indian Legion.

The soldiers of the first batch were all in their twenties, students of engineering, of medicine or those undergoing the vocational training. They gave up their studies at Bose's call and were prepared for hardships of any measure and shoulder a gun in the cause of their motherland. They knew nothing of drill and hard military discipline of the German type. They did not know even how to stand in attention when they joined the course. But this was all, the first fifteen Indian Youths formed the 'Azad Hind Fauj' some 5000 miles away from their home. There was determination and the ambitions and pride to fight for their country's freedom under the great revolutionary leader Subhas Chandra Bose. The idea was to have at least 1000 to 1500 men in the Fauj, but ultimately reached 4000 on arrival of prisoners of war mostly from Libyan front of Africa. The option was thrown open before the Prisoners of War in the camp. When Netaji appeared before them, he was greeted by the Legionaries with loud cries of "Azad Hind Zindabad", "Inquilab Zindabad", "Netaji Zindabad". They sang their own composition which were full of enthusiasm and chivalrous spirit. One of such songs is:

*"Hamey sukhako aba bhool jana padega,
Watanke liye dukha uthana padega,
Aiy! Azad hindiyo utho kamar bandho
Watan luta raha hai bachana padega"*².

These lines mean: Now we have to forget all pleasures and face sorrows for our country. Oh, free Indians, arise and gird up your loins. We shall have to save our land which is being looted by foreigners. The songs used always to be ended with "Hukum Netajika bajana pedega" (we shall have to carry out the orders of Netaji).

He used to address the Prisoners of War in the barracks for recruitment but there was never any compulsion. The Non-Commissioned Officers captured in the battle fronts of Africa or in the Middle East, were against the Indian Legion, but listened patiently to Netaji who spoke in simple Hindustani with deep pathos and love for his country. As a responsible leader of India, whose sole desire was to make India free, Netaji never made any false promises. But (though truth it was) it demanded sacrifice, not only of the pay that was paid for their family while they were prisoners, but claimed their very lives, if need be. Netaji's appeal was to their heart, their conscience, to their honest will, full of faith in his leadership, though too high for the poor, frightened, almost illiterate men under doubtful surroundings. But they had heard and known something of Bose's great sacrifice and love for the country. Girija Mukherjee, a colleague of Bose and working in the Radio Section in Berlin says: "I saw how the whole audience was coming under his spell...when he had finished, they had acquired new life, new animation, new excitement. Dr. Adalbert Seifriz, one of the German officers in charge of training of the Legion says: "To many a man Subhas Bose seemed to be a reserved and contemplative personality. But when he stood in the front of the Legion and expressed his ideas for a free India in detail, then the fire of a fighter and a revolutionary could be felt..."

During the later period of his stay in Germany, the sweeping developments in the Far East highly absorbed his attention. Though over-worked, he never forgot to encourage and inspire

2 Ibid.

his countrymen. In August 1942, the Quit India movement convinced him that revolution was imminent and he opened two more radio stations—"Congress Radio" and "Azad Muslim Radio" to enhance the tension in India. He stressed that world opinion was on the side of the people of India, they had only to ask for help needed from abroad: he would do his best to obtain it. He claimed: "I am not an apologist of the Tripartite Powers.... My whole life is one long persistent, uncompromising struggle against British Imperialism, and is the best guarantee of my bona fides...I need no credentials when I speak to my own people".

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad wrote to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on March 8, 1942:

"My dear Jawaharlal,

...Four or five days ago, a statement of Subhas Babu was broadcast from Berlin and, the next day it was announced that it might be heard in his own voice which had been recorded. I heard it. It was the voice of Subhas Babu. I think that probably it was not a record, he himself was speaking. But the broadcast from Tokyo was certainly a record. The sound of the movement of the record by means of electricity was clearly audible...

Yours Sincerely,

(A.K. AZAD)³

Netaji's vehement attack against the British Government aroused the revolutionary fervour of the Indians. During this period, his fury against the Imperialist policy and warning to the Indian leaders may be ascertained from his Berlin Radio Broadcast: "...according to the terms of offer, the speech of Sir Stafford Cripps, and the comments of English paper like the *Manchester Guardian*, it is quite clear that the real intention of the British Government is to split India into a number of States, just as Ireland was split up at the end of the last War...reached the height of the imperialist hypocrisy when, at a press conference at Delhi, he remarked that Indians have not been able to produce on agreed constitution. But the Indian people know

3 Jawaharlal Nehru: *A Bunch of Old Letters*—pp. 475-76.

from their bitter experience that only the British Government is responsible for the corruption and bribery in India..Sir Stafford must be living in a fool's paradise if he thinks that, by making such hopeless offer (Dominion Status within the Empire to be realised only when the war is over), he can satisfy Indians' hunger for freedom. In the last World War, with the help of India, the war was won by England but India's reward was further suppression and massacre (Jalianwallabag). India has not forgotten... I would like further to warn my countrymen that Britain's sole object now is to drag the Indian people in War."⁴

The courage and resourcefulness of Bose astounded Gandhiji to a great degree. Maulana Azad has referred to this commendation in his scholarly work *INDIA WINS FREEDOM*: "I saw that Subhas Chandra's escape to Germany had made a great impression on Gandhiji. He had not formerly approved many of Bose's activities. But now I found a change in his outlook. Many of his remarks convinced me that he admired the courage and resourcefulness of Subhas Bose had displayed in making his escape from India. His admiration for Subhas Bose had coloured his view about the whole war situation".

Netaji had a great foresight for future Independent India, and the introduction of Free India Centre and the Indian Legion was envisaged at the creation of a band of trained young Indian officers for various departments. This gave him first hand opportunity for the nucleus of the National Army and the foundation of a Government. Netaji became confident by the immense success he had achieved on both the two undertakings that he started on his coming to Germany, the centre of the global war. Apart from the political planning for a new State system in general, Bose desired to experiment with a troop of Indian volunteers in order to create conditions for full and smooth co-operation among different castes, religions, communities and the people. Clarifying the objective of the Indian Legion, Mr. A.C.N. Nambiar, who succeeded Netaji as the head of the Free India Centre in Germany, observes: "Subhas Chandra Bose took up ardently the idea of raising an Indian

4 *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose : Broadcast from Azad Hind Radio*, dt. 25.03.1942—Publications Division, Govt. of India—pp. 131-133.

Legion, greatly stimulated by accounts of the Czechoslovak and Polish Legion...the Legion in Europe was raised mainly with the hope of taking its members to India. Time and circumstances did not ensure consideration as to how this was to be accomplished...". Regarding the achievement of the Legion, the words coming from the mouth of no other than Field Marshal Romel the 'Desert Wizard', in the following terms, is self-explanatory..."I am pleasantly surprised to find that in spite of very little training in coastal defence (Atlantic coast), the work done here is fairly satisfactory...I am glad to see that you have done good work; I wish you and your leader all good luck."⁵

In the autumn of 1942, a military exercise by the Indian Legion was organised in honour of Netaji. Col. Satoshi Yamamoto, the Military Attache of Japanese Embassy in Berlin was present. About 3000 members of the Legion took their oath as soldiers of Free India by Lt.General Krappe under the Indian tricolour which had the springing tiger embossed on it. After the end of the Second World War, all the members of the Legion, like the members of the I.N.A. who had fought in Burma and Malaysia under their supreme commander Netaji Bose, were placed on the same footing and declared free at the conclusion of the historic Red Fort trials in Delhi. It has been learnt that more than 1000 Indian Prisoners of War and also some Indians, who had lived in Germany since before the war, were able to survive the hardships of the war and were able to return to India. A.C.N. Nambiar is of the view that, but for the establishment of the Indian Legion, all the Indians, like other prisoners of war, would have been interned in concentration camps.

Hitler—Bose conference, as stated, if studied objectively, we may come to conclude that Netaji's efforts to convince Hitler about the importance of his political mission had failed. The War strategy of Germany had no direct bearing on Bose's plan for the future. After the hardships of his perilous journey from India to Germany, after all his strenuous activities for a year, there appeared to him to be of no positive results in question of

5 N.G. Ganpuley: *Netaji in Germany*—pp.152-153.

India's independence. With German set back at Stalingrad, and Montgomery's decisive victory at El Alamein, Bose's all hope of marching to Indian frontier from the West was dashed to the ground. Apart from this, Hitler's design was to exploit Bose's talent as a chief propaganda weapon for anti-British broadcasts, and if and when necessary, as a bargaining counter in negotiations with the British. But Bose's claim was much more, and he had enough of experience about politicians to know that he must be aware of protectors who generally swallow a large share of the victories.

Netaji considered, though Japan was a party to the Axis, she was rival to Germany and that, even when her relations with Britain was peaceful, Japan had granted political asylum to the Indian revolutionary Rash Behari Bose. Rash Behari had founded Indian Independence League in Japan in 1939 and in league with him, a Japanese Army Officer Fujiwara by name, set up a secret intelligence mission at Bangkok. He allied himself with Pritam Singh, an Indian revolutionary. They enabled many branches of Indian Independence League to be started in different East Asian countries by the time when Japan entered the Second World War on December 5, 1941.

It may be mentioned that, in July 1941, Japan concluded a joint defence pact with Indo-china. Just at this time England, U.S.A. and Holland froze Japanese interests and in October, oil supplies to Japan were stopped. British armed forces mainly of Indian soldiers, were deployed in areas controlled by the British. Bose was eagerly watching the developments in the east. His aim was to open Second Front against the British in the East Asia along the Indian frontier and he was eagerly waiting for an opportune moment. And hence his close contact with the Japanese Ambassador Oshima and Col. Yamamoto in Berlin till the end of 1942. Netaji proposed before these dignitaries to shift his activities from Germany to Japan. Meanwhile, Japanese forces had entered Burma in mid-January 1942 and pressed hard on Singapore.

On February 15, 1942 Singapore fell. Within two years of the global War, Singapore which in 1941 was a proud outpost of the British Empire and her invincible, strongest naval fortress, were

no more. In 9 weeks of operations the British Fleet was completely annihilated and the British Air Force was entirely destroyed. In the War-actions, in and around Singapore alone, 73,000 able men—Indians, Australians, New Zealanders and Englishmen, equipped with all modern weapons of War, were disarmed and taken prisoners. The captives included two Lieut. Generals (Lt. Gl. Percival and Lt. Gl. Hiss), and four Major Generals (Maj. Gl. Keir, Maj. Gl. Smith, Maj. Gl. Caragon and Maj. Gl. Simmons). For Netaji, the fall of Singapore became irresistible. He made his first broadcast from the 'secret' station soon afterwards:

"I have waited silently and patiently on the course of events; now that the hour has struck I can come forward and speak. Here was certain proof of the collapse of the British Empire: India must rejoice.....In this struggle, and in the subsequent period of reconstruction we will co-operate whole heartedly with all those who help us to destroy the common enemy."⁶

On December 14, 1941, a battalion of British Indian Army surrendered to the Japanese. Captain Mohan Singh of the 1/14th Punjab Regiment of this battalion together with Captain Akram Khan and their Commanding Officer Colonel L.V. Fitzpatrick were captured in the jungle of North Malaya. At the instance of Pritam Singh, an Indian revolutionary, and Major Fujiwara of Japanese Army, Capt. Mohan Singh agreed to form a Volunteer Force for the liberation of India. It was through Mohan Singh's efforts, that the first I.N.A. was organised in East Asia as a military wing of the Indian Independence League with Rash Behari Bose as its President. The name 'Indian National Army' was suggested by Mohan Singh, and he started it on January 1, 1942 in a school at Ipoh in Malaya.

"On the 1st September, 1942 the I.N.A. was formally established. The President of the Indian Independence League, Rash Behari Bose, promoted Capt. Mohan Singh, who was commanding the I.N.A., to the rank of a General. All British ranks were surrendered and new I.N.A. ranks were given to the persons concerned."⁷ General Mohan Singh told Major Fujiwara

6 Hugh Toye: *Springing Tiger*—p.71.

7 Major General A.C. Chatterji: *India's Struggle For Freedom*—p.35.

about the great Indian leader Subhas Chandra Bose, then in Germany, and emphasised the urgency of bringing him over to East Asia. Besides, a memorandum, addressed to Major Fujiwara reveals how the soldiers of the British Indian Army had been greatly moved about Indian Independence and Netaji:

'The prisoners' letter, Taiping, 1st January 1942.

Reference your notes and memorandum over to us...we have thoroughly studied all points and in principle we agree with them...

1. Our modified views as regards co-operation with Indian National Congress.

' We consider it a point of great honour for us to accept kind, valuable and reverable leadership of Mr. S. C. Bose and his party in Berlin. We all know that he is an extremist who believes in revolutions and radical changes.....He is extremely popular amongst all freedom loving Indians, even his political enemies have great respect and regard for him. His photos can be seen in practically every house in India. In most cases people worship him like a god. He is a leader whose very name will stir up a great revolution amongst the Indian masses, which will have a strong reaction in the Indian Army.....We, the members of the Indian National Army, are prepared to shed every drop of our blood for S. C. Bose. His very name puts new life into us. We sincerely appreciate the Japanese Government's efforts to co-operate with Mr. S.C. Bose. We further request the Japanese Government may kindly use all political influence to get Mr. S.C. Bose's support and leadership for such a great movement. If the Japanese Government is successful in it, then in our opinion half the battle in India is won.....We appreciate very valuable work done by Mr. Pritam Singh in Malaya. We have great respect and regard for him.....

2. We request that as far as Co-Prosperity Sphere is concerned the Japanese Government may very kindly discuss it directly with Mr. S.C. Bose.

3. We also realise that we will not be able to show our face to the world if Indians do not play any active part in freeing their motherland. On the other hand it will be an honour to the Indian National Army to fight side by side with the glorious and

world-famed Japanese Army. We request that before sending the Indian National Army to the front line the following points should be considered..... "It consists of men belonging to about twenty different regiments from different parts of India. It is in fact a very strange mixture. In several cases they speak different languages.....In certain cases they have got their real brothers and other near relations serving in their own and other units in Malaya.....We should also remember that the Indian National Army consists of soldiers who have once thrown their arms away on the battlefield.....To build up the morale and fighting spirit of such soldiers require selected leaders and stern discipline."⁸

By early March 1942, Burma was occupied. Many British and Australian soldiers as could be evacuated by sea were shipped off. Those who could not be sent by sea were escorted under air protection by the 'Burma Road', a route reserved for Europeans only, even local Europeans and Anglo-Burmese men and women, were assured this safe route of escape to India. "Indian soldiers were left behind to surrender or fend their way through thick jungles and rugged mountains, without food or water. More than a million Indian citizens were made to evacuate and to seek a journey to home with their children and even babies in arms, through thick unexplored jungle country. It is estimated that 9,00,000 of these Indian refugees perished in the jungles and the mountains."⁹

A conference, in the meanwhile was held at Bangkok from June 15 to 23, 1942 as a follow-up course of the Tokyo Conference in March. It was historic as most of the East and South East Asian States such as Malaya, Siam, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Philippines, Japan, Manchuria, Nanking, Shanghai, Canton, Hong Kong attended on the question of Indian independence. Under the Presidency of Rash Behari Bose the conference adopted a number of resolutions, especially the armed struggle by the Indians themselves, co-operation of the Japanese Government and inviting Netaji S.C. Bose—his transference from Europe to Asia. Netaji wrote a congratulatory message to

8 In the 'Appendix-I' of the book Subhas Chandra Bose, (*The Springing Tiger*), THE DOCUMENTS OF 1942—pp.204-207.

9 Richard Stevenson: *Bengal Tiger and British Lion*—p.93.

the Bangkok Conference and pin-pointed that the Indian struggle was one. "It is now to link up Indian nationalists all over the world in one all-embracing organisation". Bose's name, by the time, was on all lips, and his famous book, *The Indian struggle* translated and retranslated, impressed all in the East.

In this hour, we are to consider that a rift developed between Rash Behari Bose and Mohan Singh. An I.N.A. contingent, was despatched by Mohan Singh to the Burma area without the knowledge of League President and the Japanese authorities. This contingent deserted to the British and the incident greatly enraged the Japanese, resulting in the arrest of General Mohan Singh and Lt.Colonel N.S. Gill, the Commandant of the Prisoners of War Camp by the Japanese. The first I.N.A. then virtually broke up. However, it was reorganised very soon and put under a very efficient Officer Lt. Col. J. K Bhonsle as the Director of Military Bureau of the Indian Independence League. It was decided, the Bureau would formulate the policies regarding training and operations, the Army to be consisted of a single Division for the time being, and four other Guerrilla Regiments were to be organised.

An objective assessment of Bose's action in the European situation during and immediately after the Singapore setback is fully justified. He exploited his direct and indirect links with Japanese and the Indians in the Far East. It may be mentioned that Japanese Imperial Headquarters sent Yamamoto to Berlin in July 1941 to contact Bose, and appointed Major Fujiwara the Liaison Officer between Japanese Government and the Indian Independence League in Bangkok. The Japanese and the League, among other items, now decided that the League would fight the British power with a view to achieve India's independence and would expect over-all support from Japan, and the latter was not to ask for any kind of political, economic, territorial or military concessions: organise a Volunteer Force from among the officers of the British Indian Army and other Indian residents in Malaya and that the Japanese Army would put Indian Independence League in touch with Netaji in Berlin.

That Netaji was to leave Europe and take over the Asian command of the India's struggle for freedom was finality, but the great problem to be solved was, how he could reach East Asia safely. Communication between Germany and Japan was impossible during those days. Passage by ship was ruled out and it was first decided to use an aircraft of the Lufthansa Company to airlift Bose via Soviet Union. General Tojo objected to this as this would amount to a breach of trust with Russia. Then an attempt was made to get an Italian plane, but due to the international network of Spy-ring in Rome, this also did not work. Finally, the choice fell on a submarine. After long and complicated discussions with the respective Military departments of Italy, Japan and Germany it was agreed upon: Netaji, accompanied by only one friend, should be taken by a German sub-marine by way of the English Channel, Bay of Biscay, then down the Atlantic Ocean along West Africa to the Indian Ocean below South Africa, and finally to south of Madagascar where he should be transferred to a Japanese submarine. The latter should take Netaji Bose to the nearest Japanese naval base in East Asia.

This type of plan, never known before in the annals of war, was carried out most successfully. This incredible achievement was due to the unified planning and efforts of Netaji himself and Special India Division, the initiative of General Oshima, the Japanese Ambassador, Col. Yamamoto, the Military Attache; and then the co-operation of the most competent military authorities of the German Government. An interesting anecdote connected with Bose's historic expedition is that, at eleventh hour, the Japanese Naval Command registered an objection by cable against a civilian's travel on a warship in war-time. Dr. Adam von Trott cabled back the Ambassador in Tokyo with the reply: "Subhas Chandra Bose is by no means a private person but Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Liberation Army". Thus the bureaucratic interference was gone.

While getting prepared most secretly for his perilous naval mission, Netaji spoke from Berlin Radio on August 31, 1942: "I am glad to observe that in several provinces—in Bihar and in Central Province—the peasants are already in the forefront..... We want *Swaraj* for the masses, *Swaraj* for the workers and the

peasants.....Most gratifying of all is the news that the clarion call of liberty has reached the ears and hearts of our soldiers at home and abroad. They have no doubt been court-martialled with characteristic brutality. But the fire spreading from one place to another.....do not forget for one moment that the British Empire is now on its last legs. At the same time, be prepared for every suffering. Before dawn, comes the darkest hour. Be brave and continue the struggle." Netaji became greatly encouraged at the Quit India Movement initiated in August 1942, and from abroad, he triggered off the revolutionary spirit of the people fighting the British in India with all violent means available. It is a matter of great significance again that the fight for India's freedom was now taking place outside India, and Netaji's call bore profound psychological bearing on the members of the British Indian Army both in Europe and in Asia.

Jawaharlal Nehru writes: "the people forgot the lesson of non-violence which had been dinned into their ears for more than twenty years, and they were wholly unprepared, mentally or otherwise, for any effective violence. That very teaching of non-violent methods produced doubt and hesitation and came in the way of violent action."

The tide of the Pacific War took a turn in June 1942, when Japan had her first shattering defeat at Midway. This development was supposed to encourage the pro-British elements in the I.N.A. to influence Mohan Singh to explode his discontent against the Japanese. His removal, the I.N.A. setback, together with the reassignment of Fujiwara (co-founder of I.N.A.) to the Supreme Command of Japanese Army in the South, and his subsequent appointment as Liaison Officer with I.N.A.—all these events set the stage for the emergence of the great Subhas Bose in the bleeding front in Greater East Asia. With regard to his journey by sub-marines, when the German Naval Headquarters commented that there was 5 per cent probability of His Excellency Bose's arrival in the Far East without being killed, in a most serene and dignified tone of voice Netaji Subhas Chandra had told them, in that case, he would face death with full satisfaction with a belief that he sacrificed himself in the cause of Freedom of his Motherland!

By the time, the first I.N.A. virtually broke up, but despite the fall of its membership from 40,000 strength to a meagre 8,000 the Senior Officers were persuaded by Rash Behari Bose and had reorganised the I.N.A. under a Directorate of Military Bureau with Lt.Colonel J.K.Bhonsle as the Commandant, and with Lt.Col. Shah Nawaz Khan, Lt. Col. M. Z. Kiani, Lt. Col. A. C. Chatterjee, Major P. K. Sahgal and many others in the Bureau. Following the arrest of Mohan Singh, Colonel Iwa Kuro had met a good number of I.N.A. officials, and he had received the same version from all of them: they would only serve again under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose and the Japanese Colonel had passed this to his Imperial Headquarters in Tokyo.

The exact date of his disappearance from Europe was given out only a few days in advance. The whole plan was enveloped in the most profound secrecy. On January 26, 1943, Netaji addressed on Indian Independence Day, before a gathering of about six hundred people in Berlin and on the 28th, he delivered his last speech before the Indian Legion. Even after his departure, his recorded voice was broadcast by Azad Hind Radio to camouflage the enemy. Mr. A. C. N. Nambiar of the Legion, Mr. Keppler and Dr. Alexander Werth of the German Foreign Office escorted Bose to the port of Kiel. Mr. Abid Hassan Safrani (later Major), a Mohammadan student of engineering from Hyderabad travelled in a special compartment in the train up to Kiel on the night of February 7-8, 1943, and he was in the dark about his destination till he arrived at Kiel.

Commander Werner Musenberg of the German Submarine received the 'Precious Cargo'—Subhas Chandra Bose, at the dawn of February 8, 1943, for bodily transfer to another submarine. Only just two years since, the same man had left his home in Calcutta at the midnight of January 17, 1941, in disguise, and now again, he left Berlin for the same historic need to quest for, and wrest freedom of India from the alien ruler. The German U-boat, a Type-IX submarine dived into water in the English Channel. A graphic account of the naval expedition, as stated by Hugh Toye is:

".....They made a wide sweep out into the Atlantic, sailed down its whole length passed the 'Cape of Good Hope' to a

meeting place four hundred miles S.S.W. of Madagascar. Here, on April 28th, they were transferred by rubber dinghy to the Japanese submarine 1-29 which took them across the Indian Ocean. From Sabang, at the northern tip of Sumatra, they went by air..... He accepted with serenity the silence and discomforts, the momentary excitement when the Captain thought they were sighted, the long cramped hours of danger. The time was passed in reading, making notes, working on a new edition of *The Indian Struggle*, talking to Hassan of all the new things to be done in the Far East. For there were many problems awaiting solution. He knew something, but not all, of the events of 1942:.....that there had been raised a force of sixteen thousand men, but it seemed that the leader had lost patience just when he might, by perseverance, have obtained all he asked. Perhaps the trouble had been short-sighted political leadership; who cared if Indians did contribute to some Japanese purposes, so long as they were serving their own?.....¹⁰

For Netaji and his adjutant Abid Hassan, the voyage from Germany to Japan was a fearfully perilous one, and it took about eighteen weeks whereas in this jet age, it barely takes twenty hours' time. They covered about 25,500 kilometres sea route, and the navy experts of the world believe this spectacular success of Netaji's bodily transfer and safe arrival from Berlin to Tokyo as almost a miracle. Along with German Commander Musenberg, Captain Masao Teraoka and Commander Juichi Izu of Japan are remembered still with high esteem with all other unnamed crews of German and Japanese Navy, who displayed courage and daring with tremendous skill. It may be placed on record, that, 'Ziauddin' and 'Orlando Mazotta' in his trips from Calcutta and Kabul respectively, for obvious reason of security, Netaji, in this audacious venture, was supposed to be a Japanese VIP named 'Matsuda'.¹¹

Bose's opening words to Sugiyama, the Army Chief of Staff, took the latter by surprise: "The war will end in victory for Japan! Will Japan send soldiers to India or not? We are going to

10 Hugh Toye : *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger* pp.84-85.

11 Fred Saito—Tatsuo Hayashida: *To Delhi ! 1943-1945—A Beacon Across Asia*—pp.158-163.

fight our way to India step by step. If we don't push on with determination we won't be able to achieve independence". Alike Hitler, Japanese Prime Minister was first hesitant to meet Bose as the Imperial Headquarters and its Operation Bureau did not constitute favourable ideology either about India or of the I.N.A. But being insisted upon, by the Army Chief as well as the Foreign Minister, General Tojo met Bose on June 10, 1943. "The magic of Bose", writes Joyce Lebra, "enchanted Tojo immediately. It had been the same with Sugiyama, Shigemitsu and nearly, every one Bose met in Japan. Not only Bose's words and passion but his eyes and voice enthralled Tojo. The meeting was brief, but Tojo agreed to another. Bose posed the question: 'Can Japan give unconditional help to Indian independence? I would like to confirm that there are no strings attached to Japanese aid! Tojo immediately agreed, and more as a gesture for good-will than as a matter of realistic judgement....' Can the Japanese Army push its operations into India proper? 'This time Tojo was unable to answer as unequivocally.'¹² But only a week later, on 16th of June 1943, Premier Tojo announced in the Diet, (Japanese Parliament): "We firmly resolve that Japan will do everything possible to help Indian Independence. I am convinced the day of Indian freedom and prosperity is not far off".

How fascinating the study of a personality appears to be when we stop for a while and dive into the world of action of a lone man! "In an alien country where, he landed," said Mr. Bhulabhai Desai (Chief Counsel of I.N.A. Court Martial) to Dilip Kumar Roy. "there had been not a soul to greet him, not a friend he could rely on, not a comrade to discuss things with—and where he had to persuade, first, the supercilious Germans that he was in a position to deliver the goods and then, the hard headed Japanese that he was destined to succeed! Just fancy my friend, for a destitute and exile, with no credentials save that of his face of light.....But with him, it was not a question of the warrior's master urge only: he had to be, withal, both the architect and builder of his dream edifice....".

12 Joyce Lebra (University of Colorado U.S.A): Bose's Influence on the Formation of Japanese Policy Toward India and the I.N.A.—Proceedings of the International Netaji Seminar 1973, Ed.Sisir K.Bose—p.321.

Mobilisation of Army and People

‘THE FIRST DROP of blood shed on Indian soil must be that of a soldier of I.N.A.’, asserted Netaji, as Indian freedom had to be won by Indians. This was the reaction of Netaji to what the Japan’s Government wanted of him of personal co-operation. ‘Operation U’—the Imphal War, is a long-drawn, a highly complex affair having its genesis dating from 1942. Only when by 1944, Japan’s military prospects were much on the wane, and supply and other problems were insurmountable, the plan was taken up, especially, with the arrival of Netaji Bose in the Far East. Indian opinion was a vital concern to Imperial Governmental Head Quarters of Japan as it was considered British propaganda would attempt to divert nationalist animosity from Britain to Japan once the Japanese Army crossed the border into India. These factors and Netaji’s charismatic leadership, gave Netaji what bargaining power he had with Tokyo. Japan thus, became receptive to Bose’s aggressive plan of Imphal invasion both on political and military considerations, and the operation was the final offensive of the East Asia war mounted by three Burma-based Japanese Divisions and one I.N.A. Division. The Imphal campaign has been regarded later on as the ‘brain-child of Netaji who with his tremendous influence dragged the Japanese military into the disastrous adventure’.

Netaji held a Press conference in Tokyo on June 19, 1943, followed by Radio broadcasts in which he said: “Friends you may remember that I have in the past assured you more than once that, when the hour strikes, I and many others like myself, will be your side to share the glory of fighting and suffering side by side and to share with you the joy of victory as well. The British Broadcasting Corporation has said that I did not have the

slightest intention of fulfilling my pledge. I would like to tell them that my pledge which had been given not to the B.B.C. but to my countrymen, will be redeemed in the fullness of time. Now I am not far from the Indian frontier. No power on earth was able to hamper my movements since January 1941; and no power on earth will be able to prevent my crossing the frontier once again in order to participate in the last phase of our national struggle... Let me convey through you to our comrades in prison and in internment my brotherly greetings... They have upheld the honour and prestige of our country. Through their sufferings, they have declared to the whole world that enslaved India is at war with Britain. I and all those who have been working outside India are proud of them... I assure them once again that their sufferings will not be in vain. India shall be free, and before long..."¹

The readers may glance back to the preceding chapters and see that India had been in revolt against the British rule, and people in thousands were being imprisoned, persecuted, killed and mutilated with their households burnt in Quit India Movement since August 1942.

Netaji's speeches over Tokyo Radio emphasising his determination to launch an armed fight against Anglo-American imperialists thrilled the overseas Indians with great delight. When he arrived at Singapore, he was received with a tumultuous enthusiasm by immense surging crowd of all walks of life—their Man of Destiny had come to lead them to liberate their Mother India. On July 4, 1943, the general assembly of the Indian Independence League was held at the Cathay Municipal Building theatre attended by 2000 delegates representing Indian revolutionaries from all over Greater East Asia. Aged, ailing Rash Behari Bose, the proverbial revolutionary announced his resignation as President of the League and passed on to Netaji as his successor. Taking over the charge, the new President stood up with folded hands and revealed to the vast masses of the gathering his decision to form a Provisional Government of Free India and to lead himself the Indian

1 Broadcast from Tokyo, June 24, 1943: *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose*—Publications Division, Government of India.

National Army towards India. He called upon all his countrymen in East Asia to line up in one solid phalanx and prepare for the grim fight.²

The audience, most of whom had never seen Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in person but heard a lot about him, was now captivated by his moving speech brimming with passion and sincerity. His bright face, erect body with expression coming from a magnetic personality conquered every heart without exception. Netaji and Rash Behari paid a courtesy visit to Field Marshal Count Terauchi, the Japanese Commander-in-Chief in the South, then at his Command Headquarters in Singapore. And the next day, he held a military review of 13,000 officers and men of the I.N.A. (This was the strength and its organisation was based on the principles of guerrilla warfare when Netaji Bose assumed the leadership). His address to the I.N.A. at Singapore on July 15, 1943, may be treated in history as a Testament of the Supreme Commander—the first soldier of the last War of India's Independence. It also claims to have the intrinsic value not only of patriotism or leadership but of something much more that may be applicable to any General of war or a statesman of any enslaved nation:

“Soldiers of India's Army of Liberation!

Today is the proudest day of my life: Today it has pleased Providence to give me the unique privilege and honour of announcing to the whole world that India's Army of Liberation has come into being..... Comrades, Soldiers! Let your battle-cry be—“To Delhi, To Delhi”! How many of us will individually survive this war of freedom, I do not know. But I do know this, that we shall ultimately win and our task will not end until our surviving heroes hold the victory parade on another graveyard of the British empire—the Lal Quila or Red Fortress of ancient Delhi..... As soldiers, you will always have to cherish and live up to the three ideals of faithfulness, duty and sacrifice. Soldiers

2 ‘India was won by force and must be governed by force, and if the British were to withdraw, it would be in favour not of the most fluent tongue or of the most ready pen but the strongest arm and the sharpest sword!’—*Times* [This was the reaction of the *Times* to the moderate reformist proceedings of the First Session of the Congress in 1885].

who always remain faithful to their nation, who are always prepared to sacrifice their lives, are invincible.....

"A true soldier needs both—military and spiritual training. You must, all of you, so train yourselves and your comrades that every soldier will have unbounded confidence in himself, will be conscious of being immensely superior to the enemy, will be fearless of death, and will have sufficient initiative to act on his own in any critical situation should the need arise. To those of you who are officers, I should like to say that your responsibility is a heavy one Because of our political enslavement, we have no tradition like that of Mukden, Port Arther or Sedan to inspire us Remember always that officers can make or unmake an army. Remember, too, that the British have suffered defeats on so many fronts largely because of worthless officers.

"Comrades! you have voluntarily accepted a mission that is the noblest that the human mind can conceive of you are today the embodiment of India's hopes and aspirations. So conduct yourself that your countrymen may bless you and posterity may be proud of you. I assure you that I shall be with you in darkness and in sunshine, in sorrow and in joy, in suffering and victory. For the present, I can offer you nothing except hunger, thirst, privation, forced marches and death. But if you follow me in life and in death, as I am confident you will, I shall lead you to victory and freedom. It does not matter who among us will live to see India free. It is enough that India shall be free and that we shall give our all to make her free. May God now bless our Army and grant us victory in the coming fight!"³

The officers and the other ranks, all of whom had been the regular members of the British Indian Army, were dazzled, flattered. Everyone of them learnt deep in his heart that they had a real great leader. "I was one of those officers", writes Major General Shah Nawaz Khan, "who were brought up in military atmosphere and loyalty to the British Crown. Ever since the start of the first I.N.A., I had been fighting against it, as I felt

3 Speech at a military review of the Indian National Army, July 5, 1943—*Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose*: pp. 182-184.—Publications Division, Government of India.

all along that the Japanese were exploiting us and at heart I was an admirer of the British people. Therefore, when Netaji arrived I watched him very keenly. What impressed me most about him was his absolute devotion to his country. I must frankly confess that from the moment I came into personal contact with him he exercised a strange influence over me. Even now I do not know in what proportion the man, the soldier and the statesman in him were blended. At home the man in him seemed to dominate, at the front and in the midst of his troops, the soldier in him shone in splendid glory, and in the councils and conferences and at his desk, a Head of the State of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, his brilliant statesmanship made a profound impression on one and all of us."⁴

Netaji was so dynamic, so laborious, and stoic that he had shown no interest in the common pleasures of life. Premier Tojo and Field Marshal Terauchi both were so much impressed with his greatness of personality and activism that Tojo chose to forget all his displeasure at the manner of other Indian leaders in abruptly 60-point demand a year ago. The Premier met Netaji on his own and said: "You may go ahead with the establishment of your Provisional Government....." Flashed with joy Netaji asked: "Mr. Prime Minister, how about my other question at our last meeting in Tokyo?" "General Terauchi", Tojo answered, "is in charge of all operations in this region. Imperial Headquarters will certainly respect his recommendation." In a grand rally of the Indians residing in Singapore on July 9, 1943 including a large number of Malayas, Chinese and I.N.A. troops, in which the Indian crowd alone numbered about 60,000, Netaji made a speech of vital importance. On this day, outlining the action he was going to take, he said:

"I would like to tell you now quite frankly what made me leave my home and homeland and on a journey fraught with dangers of every kind. I was lodged safely in a British prison when I silently resolved to risk everything..... It took me full three months of prayer and meditation to decide if I had strength enough to face death in fulfilling my duty..... The time

4 Major General Shah Nawaz Khan, A Divisional Commander of I.N.A., a Minister of the Provisional Government of Free India, later a Railway Minister of State under Pandit Nehru.

has come when I can openly tell the whole world, including our enemies, how it is proposed to bring about national liberation. Indians outside India, particularly in East Asia, are going to organise a fighting force which will be powerful enough to attack the British Army in India. When we do so, a revolution will break out,..... but also among the Indian Army which is now standing under the British flag....." He continued with emphasis, "..... you will now realise that the time has come for three million Indians living in East Asia to mobilise all their available resources—including money and manpower. Half-hearted measures will not do. I want total mobilisation and nothing less out of this mobilisation, I expect at least three hundred thousand soldiers, and three crores that is thirty millions of dollars. I also want a unit of brave Indian women to form a 'Death-defying Regiment' who will wield the sword which the brave Rani of Jhansi wielded in India's First War of Independence in 1857. Our countrymen at home are now hard-pressed and they are demanding a second front. Give me total mobilisation in East Asia and I promise you a second front—a real second front for the Indian struggle....."⁵

The response was instantaneous and almost every Indian resident did his best. Netaji never asked for any facility from Japan which could be provided by the Indians. He had been approached on this point, but he refused to accept any assistance other than the supply of war material. He asked the Indians in the East Asia regions that he did not want to approach any one as long as they could help themselves. It was for this sincerity and frankness that the Indian people showered everything upon him—manpower, money and material wherever he went. Major General Shah Nawaz Khan, who worked with Netaji for the entire period he was in East Asia, has stated that, 'several Indians in the East had brought into practice the slogan, "Total Mobilisation"'. It is seldom, if ever, that people sacrifice their all for the course of which the end is uncertain, but Indians of all castes and creed threw in their lot with Netaji and were ready to give whatever was asked from them *Karo Sab Nichawar, Bano Sab Fakir* was the slogan that

⁵ Major General A.C. Chatterjee: *India's Struggle for Freedom*—pp. 76-81.

Netaji gave them and men like Habib Betai, Khanna and numerous others willingly, gave all their fortunes amounting to several lakhs to the Azad Hind Government and became FAKIRS. A total sum of 20 crores was collected and deposited in the Azad Hind Bank, Rangoon.'

It was Subhas Chandra Bose, who turned the Independence League and the National Army into a revolutionary movement aimed at liberating India from the British, and ironically enough, when in October 1943, Lord Wavell reiterated the British Empire's promise of the Dominion Status in Delhi, Netaji Bose was proclaiming 'Provisional Government of Free India' in Singapore—a queer process of history.

Netaji's decision made the I.N.A., Asia's first regular army to include women in its ranks. This policy bewildered the traditional Japanese military hierarchy, because to their judgement, women were unsuitable in regular armed forces. Only women in nursing service of the Red Cross could take part in a number of Japanese war fronts, and they were not treated as regular members of army. The Chinese guerrillas sometimes operated with women soldiers, and no other regular army was known in Asia to have recruited women until Netaji announced his decision of Rani Jhansi Regiment in the presence of the Japanese Prime Minister. The Misgivings of laxity of discipline in the I.N.A. on account of Women Regiment were all wiped out in the complete absence of any such failings. This great thing, the high standard of morality in the Azad Hind Fauj, enhanced Japanese respect for Netaji's leadership to a great height.

A deputation of the Sikh community called on Netaji in Singapore in connection with the release of Mohan Singh, then at the Japanese custody. Netaji gave a patient hearing and talked them very sympathetically and frankly. The circumstance was not favourable to get Mohan Singh released but he bore the point constantly in his mind. He felt unhappy with the situation Mohan Singh, a great nationalist army leader, was put into. In fact, he intended to get him released as soon as the Provisional Government got a firm foothold in the liberated India, and it is learnt, it was also Netaji's intention to make him Minister of

State. But due to exigency and the topmost priority of the Imphal action, it was not to be.

As soon as the preliminaries done in Singapore, Netaji, on the invitation of Dr. Ba Maw the then Head of the State of Burma, attended the Independence Day celebration of Burma. He took this opportunity of paying a visit to the tomb of Emperor Bahadur Shah, the last Emperor of India. He turned his face towards India and made a heart-rending oration over the tomb with himself visibly moved: 'It is perhaps strange, may be a lucky coincidence of history that while the remains of India's last Emperor rest on the soil of Burma, the remains of the last king of Free Burma now rest on the soil of India. He appealed the people of Burma and the troops of the I.N.A. present in Rangoon, to fight shoulder to shoulder to overthrow the last enemy, the common enemy of Burma and India. He remembered the famous couplet of Bahadur Shah who was also a poet of renown:

Gazion men boo rahegi job talak inaki

Takht London tak calegi tegh Hindusthaniki.....

(As long as the last particle of faith exists in the souls of India's freedom fighters, the sword of India shall continue to penetrate the heart of London.)

The civilians and the army highly surcharged with emotion, burst into thundering cheers to hear the thrilling utterance of Netaji. Netaji donated a token amount of two lacs of rupees—a goodwill of the Indians towards the new Independent Government of the Burmese people. On his return to Singapore, Netaji completely reorganised the Indian Independence League and its activities along with the organisation of the Indian National Army. He laid stress on the Department of Publicity and Propaganda which controlled a number of newspapers, published books, pamphlets, posters. This department was put under S.A. Iyer and controlled the radio station of Indian Independence League in Singapore. The reorganised Finance Department had two main branches—Accounts and Audit. Lt. Col. A.C. Chatterjee, the General Secretary to the League was entrusted with Finance, and Bills were paid by pre-auditing for furtherance of their payment. Budgets were framed for all

departments. Supply, Recruitment, Training, Ceylone Department, Intelligence, Education, Social Welfare, Housing and Women were the various Departments, Netaji reformed most and newly introduced. Grades for League employees and their pay scales of pocket money were so fixed so that more or less, they corresponded to the ranks of the I.N.A. The Secretary of a department received a sum of 250 dollars a month while an Assistant Secretary received 170 dollars.

AZAD HIND FAUJ

Netaji formally assumed the charge of the Supreme Command of the Indian National Army and renamed it as "Azad Hind Fauj", on August 25, 1943. He issued the Special Order of the Day: "I welcome! in the interests of the Indian Independence Movement and of the Azad Hind Fauj, I have taken over the direct command of our Army from this day..... I regard myself as the servant of 38 crores of my countrymen, who profess different religious faiths. I am determined to discharge my duties in such a manner that the interests of these 38 crores may be safe in my hands and every single Indian will have reason to put faith in me only one will, namely, to do or die in the cause of India's freedom. When we stand, the Azad Hind Fauj to be like a wall of granite; when we march, the Azad Hind Fauj has to be like a steam-roller..... Comrades, Officers and men! With your unstinted support and unflinching loyalty, the Azad Hind Fauj will become the instrument of India's liberation. Ultimate victory will certainly be ours, I assure you".⁶

The Recruitment and Training Department of the I.N.A. drew Bose's attention most. He completely reorganized the Army. He abolished the Military Bureau and appointed Lt. Col. (later Major General) J.K. Bhonsle as the Chief of Staff. He started recruitment of the civilian people for the I.N.A., revised the scales of pocket allowances and increased the scale of rations for the troops. The total strength of the Army raised to three active Divisions—each ten thousand strong, and 20,000 more soldiers

6 Special Order of the Day on the occasion of taking over Direct Command of the Army (August 25, 1943: first Special Order of Netaji as Supreme Commander of the I.N.A.).

were recruited and put under training. on his arrival, the enlistment of fighting force from among the Prisoners of War and from the first I.N.A. of General Mohan Singh, increased greatly, the number went from 8,000 to 30,000. A still greater number of volunteers could have easily been available from the previous Army, but unfortunately, the Japanese had sent large number of them to distant regions of South East Asia to help them in the war reconstruction work such as preparation of airfields, construction of roads, bridges, barracks and railways etc. When Netaji insisted on bringing those Indian Prisoners of War back, unlike Germany, Japan pleaded their shortage of ships for transporting them and also on the ground that their active help in the construction work was of urgent need.

It may not be out of the point of our study to know that during his stay in Germany, Netaji had kept himself physically fit by taking physical training regularly as a true soldier. He used to go on long route marches with the full kits and equipment of the military officer. He acquainted himself with the current military matters, and learnt the German language and studied books on military officers as much as his schedule could permit. He had visited the different fronts in European theatre of war. He also saw the industrial organisations which were in service round the clock to help the War efforts. All this helped him obtaining a good deal of knowledge of the Modern German military machine. He was highly impressed by the German thoroughness in war organisation. The experiences thus acquired in first hand, now bore fruits when he became the Chief of all matters concerning military and civil administration in East Asia. Here in Tokyo, he, at the first opportunity, prior to his first conference with Tojo, paid visits to schools, factories, hospitals, military establishments and the naval dock-yards at Yokosuka. It is presumed, Bose was taking a look at Japan's actual strength.

The formation and units of the Azad Hind Fauj, as Netaji reorganised, consisted of the following formations and units: No 1 Division, Commander: Lt. Col. (Later Major General) M.Z. Kiani. It consisted of three Guerrilla Regiments: (1) Gandhi Regiment: Commander—Col. I. Kiani, (2) Azad Regiment: Commander—Col. Gulzara Singh, (3) Nehru Regiment:

Commander—Col. (Later Major General) Aziz Ahmed Khan. An Intelligence Group was commanded by Lt. Col. (Later Col.) S.N. Malik, 'Sardar-e-Jung'. This unit was responsible for collection, collation and reporting of useful informations in connection with I.N.A. troops as well as those of the enemy. It was also responsible for organising units for intelligence work in the front line as well as behind the lines of the enemy position.

Besides this, there were different Branches established. The 'G' Branch, which was put in charge of Lt. Col. (Later Major General) Shah Nawaz Khan, was responsible for planning, operation, training of troops and intelligence work of the army. 'A' Branch, which was commanded by Lt. Col. (Later Col.) N.S. Bhagat, was responsible for issuing necessary orders and general administration. The 'Q' Branch with Col. K.P. Thinimayya as the head of the unit was in charge of the supply of accommodation, equipment, clothing, rations and transport and Medical Branch alongwith Department of Education were operated by Lt. Col. (Later Major General) A.D. Loganadan and Lt. Col. Jahangir respectively.

As the army was expanded the dearth of suitably trained officers in the I.N.A. was felt. An Officers' Training School was established in Neesoon with Lt. Col. Habibur Rahman as the first O.C. (Officer Commanding) of the school, and other experienced officers specially selected as instructors. Netaji laid special emphasis on proper spiritual training of the cadets, and he considered extremely this imperative for they were to become the leaders of their troops, the pivot of the Army, and unless and until they were imbued with the highest national spirit, they could not lead their men on the path of blood bath. The Officers having commission from this Officers' Training School had fully justified their cause when they led their troops on the different battle fronts on the Indo-Burma frontier.

In the beginning, recruitment in the I.N.A. was made from among the volunteers from the British Indian Army—both from the former I.N.A. category as well as from the Prisoners of War. Later on, it was done entirely from the civilian population. Army recruits used to be directly absorbed in the Azad Hind

Fauj, and for the training of the civilian volunteers. Camps were established under the management of the Indian Independence League. Singapore and Kuala Lumpur were the principal Training Camps for the training of civilian volunteers under the regular members of the Azad Hind Fauj.

Netaji, as the Supreme Commander of the Army took keen interest in the training of all his contingents. Off and on he visited the troops on training in the parade ground and accompanied them in manoeuvres and in the training for jungle warfare. He also visited their barracks, saw conditions they were living in, and inspected for himself, the cooking of their food which he himself tasted. The love and respect for Netaji, the Supreme Commander of the Fauj, was enshrined in the heart of every member of the Azad Hind Fauj—the Indian National Army.

After Rangoon, his visits to Bangkok and Saigon followed. Speeches, interviews and long meetings with Japanese Commandants and Government Officials and radio broadcasts. A titanic force incarnate, he toured from place to place, from State to State, and made contact with people, soldiers, business circle. As if a living dynamo Netaji generated energy and enthusiasm in every soul to the singular goal—India's war of liberation. He was tireless taking little sleep and working into the night. Close study of international situation he did make with his ever alert mind, and he used the same in his broadcasts to his own advantage. The disastrous famine in Bengal in this time—1943, moved him violently for the suffering millions. "In August he made an offer of 1,00,000 tons of rice to be shipped under suitable guarantees to Indian ports as a gift from the League. The Offer was ignored, and this gave him further opportunity for vehement attacks on the Indian Government and on the new Viceroy, Lord Wavell. The allied victory in North Africa.....dismissed as too remote to concern India, who need only look at the Japanese standing on her eastern frontier to be sure of British defeat....."⁷

'In any event the rice in Burma was controlled by Subhas Chandra Bose', writes Richard Stevenson of Canada, "and

7 Hugh Toye: *Springing Tiger*—p. 90.

shipment of rice from Burma to alleviate the famine condition had been offered. The offer, kept secret by the British, appears in an annex to a War Cabinet document".⁸

Everything of the official British documents, particularly in the matter of Netaji, the Indian National Army, the revolutionary actions of the Indians and the Bengal Famine of 1943, are yet to disclose the truth in their entirety. 'The Transfer of Power', delineating the constitutional relations between Britain and India, has been brought to light by British Government in 1973. This official paper, which is of great importance to the study of modern India's history, suffers from drawbacks in many respects though the main features have been covered. Some documentation, such as that relating to the suppression of the uprising in Midnapore appears to have been destroyed, and there are cases where the documentation appears to be missing. However, the point of consideration in our present study concerning the attitude of British War Cabinet vis-a-vis Netaji towards Bengal Famine, may be ascertained to a great extent from the following paragraphs of the Official Paper:

Axis Radio—The following extract is taken from the *Azad Hind* news in Tamil for the 14th August, relayed from Germany:-

"It is reported that the Indian Independence League at Bangkok has decided to enlist the help of Japan, Thailand and Burma to export rice to India and thus improve the food situation. Though it is normally impossible to send the rice to India from Japanese occupied territory, the League is prepared to do so if the British Government approves the proposal and gives an undertaking that the food so sent will not be reserved for military consumption or exported from India. This gesture of the league is expressive of the sympathy of Indians in East Asia and their desire to relieve the suffering of their Indian brethren. If the British do not accept this generous offer they will be betraying true intentions".⁹

8 Richard Stevenson : *Bengal Tiger and British Lion, An Account of the Bengal Famine of 1943*—p. 124

9 *The Transfer of Power: 1942-47*, Vol. IV—p. 273

This irresponsibility of inhuman and dastardly action may be squarely laid on Winston Churchill, the then Prime Minister-cum-War Minister of Britain. Britain can not write off the verdict of history on his score, for the loss of more than four million¹⁰ human lives in Bengal famine for no fault of their own.

The British authority was greatly frightened of Netaji and the I.N.A. in the spearhead of Delhi invasion with the Japanese arms behind. They adopted various Denial Policies which were aimed at Bengal. It involved the Denial of Boats, Transport, and the Transport of Rice and Paddy from the Denial Areas, and to this effect, the Government issued as many as 88 confidential orders. In spite of the fact that, "in Bengal and Assam, there was a large surplus of food available for military, and some of this was shipped abroad, but most of it was taken up by the extremely large army that had been recruited to fight the Japanese.....a 'scarcity' in the mofussil was desired by the military for recruiting purposes; certainly the hard times spurred enlistment and many men left villages for relative security of the Army....."¹¹. This nefarious strategy of 'desired scarcity' of food causing devastation in Bengal had the sole design behind it was to offer nothing in the form of human resources in case Netaji successfully appears with his victorious Army. The main bulk of the revolutionary forces would draw from the soil of Bengal, they apprehended.

It was the genius of Netaji which could penetrate the mysterious depths of human soul, called to his aid those mighty energies. Within a few months since his assumption of charges of the liberation movement in East Asia, he had a clear grasp of the main problems. He observed that the most important territories were Malaya, Burma and Siam. These regions had rich Indian population and must be his chief sources of money and men. He visited these areas, and to the smaller Indian

10 Estimate of death toll in Bengal Famine-1943:

1 Famine Inquiry Commission--1.5 million (approximate).

2 Calcutta University Statistical Survey--3.5 million.

3 K.C. Ghose, the author of *Famines in Bengal 1773-1943*--6 million.

4 Communist Party source in Bengal--12 million.

5 Census Statistics (population curve 1940-1951--9 million less people inspite of vast increase of birth rate after the war.

11 Ibid.

communities in China and Indonesia, he sent his senior Army officers for the collection of money, materials and recruits.

Large sums of money ranging from a few cents to lakhs of dollars were contributed to the Azad Hind movement. At public gatherings, the garlands, which were given to Netaji, were sold by auction and fetched large sums. The enthusiasm and the spirit of patriotism evinced by the Indians was marvellous. The sacrifice exhibited, particularly by the poorer people, was spectacular. Many families gave all they possessed—their Bank Pass Books and postal savings and cash, and in addition, enlisted themselves—father, mother, sons and daughters for different works in connection with the Indian Independence Movement. The gift of the *goalas* (Milk men) belonging to U.P. and Bihar requires special mention. They donated all their cattle which sometimes fetched several thousand dollars per head and then enlisted themselves volunteers in the I.N.A. In one of the meetings, one of Netaji's garlands was sold for five lakh of dollars. The enthusiasm, and the spirit of competition in giving up all they had, was something unparalleled in history. Singapore and Malaya demonstrated best, and women volunteered in large numbers to join the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, particularly from the mainland of Malaya.¹²

Netaji gave a call for 3 lakhs of men for I.N.A. But the Japanese Government could provide arms only for 30 thousand soldiers, and rations for 50 thousand. In this situation, only 20 thousand were recruited from the ex-Indian Army men, 30 thousand from the civilians who mainly hailed from South India. Netaji said, it was India's wealth which tempted poor British from beyond the seas. "We see today that as a result of political slavery and economic exploitation the people of India are dying of hunger and starvation. And the British nation, which was once poor and in want, has become.....luxurious with the wealth of India. Since 1920 the Indian people have learnt two things from Mahatma Gandhi which are the indispensable preconditions for

12 Dr. Lakshmi Swaminathan, one of the most popular and prosperous Gynaecologist in Singapore gave up her roaring practice to be in uniform and to undergo all the hardships a soldier has to go through in the battle front. She became the Commander of the legendary Rani Jhansi Regiment of brigade's strength, over and above a Cabinet member of the Provisional Government of Free India.

the attainment of independence. They have, first of all, learnt national self-respect and self-confidence as a result of which revolutionary fervour is now blazing in their hearts."

Secondly, they have now got a country wide organisation which reaches the remotest village of India...I would like to remind you that when Mahatma Gandhi commended his non-cooperation programme to the Indian nation at the annual session of the Congress at Nagpur in December 1920, he said: "If India had the sword today, she would have drawn the sword". And proceeding further with this argument, Mahatmaji then said that since armed revolution was out of the question, the only alternative before the country was that of non-cooperation or *Satyagraha*. Since then times have changed.....The final struggle for liberty will be long and hard and we must go on fighting, till the last Britisher in India is either cast in prison or thrown out of the country. I would like to warn you that after our Army of Liberation sets foot on Indian soil, it will take at least twelve months and perhaps more, to liberate the whole of India from the British Yoke. Let us therefore gird up our loins and prepare for a long and hard struggle"¹³.

Hong Kong, the important manufacturing centre of electronic torches bulbs and matches, contributed large quantities of these materials and 300 recruits for I.N.A. Philippines League Branch supplied large consignment of mosquito nets, made of fibre (sisal), which was of immense value to the I.N.A. for jungle warfare. In Shanghai, Netaji was welcomed with remarkable enthusiasm, 800 men and 150 women volunteered for Azad Hind Fauj. Of the 800 men, the majority belonged to the Shanghai Police force and most of these sturdy men hailed from the Punjabi Sikh Community. Sumatra and Java provided food grains—maize in abundance, and quite a large sum of money. In these islands, transport facilities were inadequate, and added to that, Japanese authorities put many obstacles to the despatch of the supplies to the I.N.A. Headquarters.

In Indo-China, D.M. Khan, Chidambaram Chettiar and Maulana Abdul Aziz were in charge of the movement with its

13 Broadcast from Bangkok, October 2, 1943—*Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose*—pp. 200-204.—Publications Division, Government of India

Headquarters in Saigon. When Netaji visited Saigon, his reception was spectacular but as the French authority did not like his presence there, Japanese Army officials had to take special precautionary measures. Netaji appealed to the Indians for Unity, Faith and Sacrifice in the cause of liberation of Mother India. In the public meeting, a remarkable incident to mention was that, a young Sindhi merchant wished to have *darshan* of Netaji and desired to offer his humble mite. He saw Netaji for a few minutes and handed over to him a cheque of 5,00,000 piastres and requested that this should be treated as a donation by an anonymous person. This being the first individual contribution of over one lakh dollars in East Asia, it was highly appreciated, and the donor became known to the public by and by. This youngman of 22 who also offered his services for work in the Independence movement whenever required, was Khiamal of Messrs Lal Chand & Sons of Saigon.

Netaji Bose's glowing words inspired the troops and civilians alike with the ardour which was burning in his own bosom. The greatness of Netaji was infused into the mighty host. Each man exerted himself to the utmost. His eye was everywhere and his cheering and inspiring voice roused men to almost superhuman exertions. He had already discussed with the Japanese about the role of the I.N.A. in the proposed Imphal campaign. He disagreed with Field Marshal Terauchi, the C-in-C of the South East Asia Command, with regard to I.N.A.'s negative role—they should be left in Singapore, and that only espionage and propaganda groups be used in the War fronts. With great insight he dealt with the matter and opined: 'Any liberation of India secured through Japanese sacrifices is worse than slavery'. He insisted that Indians must make the maximum contribution of blood and sacrifice themselves and urged that the I.N.A. be allowed to form the spearhead of the offensive. The Japanese Commander-in-chief, at last agreed upon the employment of one I.N.A. regiment as a trial. Netaji, on the basis of this, reformed the 1st I.N.A. Division.

In September 1943, the selected men of the 1st Division came together as 'Subhas Regiment' under Captain Shah Nawaz Khan, formerly of the 1/14 Punjab Regiment of the British Indian Army. Shah Nawaz was one of the best young officers,

and Netaji sent this regiment for hard training for the trial regiment as promised, until it began to move to Burma in November. The other regiments were refilled rapidly with new volunteers from the training centres in Malaya, Siam, Burma and South China. The training structure was supported by Officers and NCO's Training Schools and by the Balak Sena—the Boy's Organisation. Women were to play their part as nurses and soldiers in the Rani of Jhansi Regiment.

He reconstructed the Intelligence groups. In the former I.N.A., this branch was a complete failure. He redesignated them as Bahadur Group to operate behind the enemy line carrying out sabotage, espionage, and the subversion of British Indian troops. The 'Intelligence Group' would work in the battle area and the 'Reinforcement Group' would collect Indian prisoners and pass them on to I.N.A. There is no technological substitute for a well-placed and resourceful spy. When Netaji Bose shattered the most developed British intelligence in the world, and by far the most, daringly succeeded in crushing the entire Anglo-American War machinery by coming over from Europe to the Far East by sea-route, all the London-based British M16 agents had been struck with wonder—"This is impossible, unbelievable." The British Secret Service cried out "How the Devil did Bose do this," and Sir Winston Churchill, the 'British Bull Dog' thumbed and murmured, "Incredible".

Netaji opened five centres of his Secret Service Training at Penang with Major N. Gopalaswami as the Director. The Agents were despatched from the 'Sandicraft' in Penang. As the President of the Indian Independence League, Netaji sent in March, 1943 a batch of revolutionaries from Bangkok and Singapore in Submarines to organise revolution, as well as collection of information about conditions inside India. Through this channel he was to get a telegraphic communication on the Berlin-Afghan-Tokyo line, and from Bengal, bringing intelligence to Indo-Burma border. Revolutionaries, namely Mahinder Singh of Punjab, Abdul Md. Quadir of Travancore, Satyendra Bardhan of Bengal, S.A. Anand of U.P. and Fouza Singh (Singh reached India on foot via Assam), were captured by the British and hanged at Madras Penitentiary on September 10, 1943.

A group of Buddhist Agents in the Independence League who had been sent before to Ceylon in September, 1942, converged on the important naval base of Trincomalee and carried out minor acts of sabotage with some success. A group of Secret Service men of the I.N.A. slipped into Indian Ocean and arrived at Kathiawar and Dwaraka area in the West Coast and another party in the East Coast. Dr. Pabitra Mohan Roy and his party, directly picked up by Netaji himself, were taken into submarine from Penang to Burma, assigned their areas of operation in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Netaji received much valuable information from these men prior to his Imphal campaign, in March, 1944. They were led by S.N. Chopra who opened a wireless link in Chittagong. Mr. T.K. Rao who was a prisoner in the hand of Field Marshal Romel in the African war, and one of the first to join Indian Legion in Germany and who accompanied Major Swami in a Submarine later following Netaji's historic naval expedition, became a successful Agent of the I.N.A. We should not, in this context, miss the point that one in party of eight, who were all the former employees of the Indian Field Post Office unit in Bombay, betrayed the entire party and got them arrested.

Captain N.G. Roy Bardhan, a Secret Service officer of the I.N.A., states: "while in action in Singapore, I was taken a prisoner (Warrant Officer of the British Indian Army) on February 15, 1942, and in the same year I joined I.N.A. I was commissioned in the I.N.A. as a Lieutenant, and subsequently a Captain in the S.S. Group 'A' Coy. When Netaji took over the Command, he reorganised it as 'Bahadur Group'. I acted under Cap.: Tajik and Unit Commander Lt. Col. Taj Mohammad, and subsequently Lt. Colonel Burhanuddin. I was among the first contingent of 500 I.N.A. troops who sailed in S.S. RAKUA MARU from Singapore and arrived in Rangoon on November 21, 1942. Ours was the Advance party to Arakan Sector through Akyab under Lt. Col. L.S. Misra. With a party of 15, I infiltrated into the Indian territory on 3rd Feb., 1944 under the orders of my Commander Lt. Col. Misra and Major Meher Das. It was on a secret mission for the furtherance of I.N.A. activities within India by way of contacting the revolutionaries..... I remained underground for a period of 3¹/₂ years, and served my country under the dynamic command of our great Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

"While in India, we moved from Chittagong and Narayanganj, to Gauhati, carried on the secret mission from Gauhati in Assam as the Headquarters so that, Imphal Campaign and its preparatory measures might be conducted. In the process, some of my comrades in arms who infiltrated under my leadership had been arrested and court-martialled at different prisons with death sentence for one and life imprisonment to others under 'Enemy Agents Ordinance.' Naik Sardara Singh was hanged to death in Alipore Central Jail on March 23, 1945. I evaded the warrant of arrest from 3rd Feb., 1944, till August 15, 1947 and the British Indian Authority declared me 'Missing', sometimes as 'Dead' and I had to move from pillar to post even without food and shelter for several days and nights. Many amongst us, thus, did our humble best as our Supreme Commander wanted us to do, to 'pay the price of liberty'..... During my underground job in Calcutta I was rendered active help and secret shelters by Satyaranjan Bakshi, Hemaprasanna Majumder, Kiran Das, Bela Mitra, Ashraffuddin Chowdhury and Sarat Ch. Bose. I met Prabhudayal Himmatshingka and Amrick Singh Gill many a time at Wellington Square (now Subodh Mallick Square) at dead of night and held discussions about Netaji and I.N.A. Born and brought up at Malaysia, Amrick Singh Gill, a gallant Sikh youngman, is a firebrand patriot. He tore away the Mercy Petition drafted by the Lawyers in Alipore and during his shifting to a separate prison for hanging to death, he escaped from military custody with his hands and legs still in chains, never to be arrested. Even after independence, Prime Minister Nehru did not agree for my instant release but suggested to face the Court Martial when I, categorised 'Black' was released at the Military Cantonment at Khamptee in M.P. on May 3, 1948. Lt. General F.R.R. Butcher, the then C-in-C of Indian Army pronounced his verdict: "Having been classified 'Black', he (Roy Bardhan) has been dismissed from service and will forfeit his pay and allowances etc. 'The irony of history is that the Britishers by that time were themselves dismissed by the Indians'.¹⁴

14 Recorded statement along with interview on 15.8.90 by the writer with Capt. N.G. Roy Bardhan, General Secretary of I.N.A. Association, West Bengal. The Captain has been awarded *Tamra Patra* as well as Freedom Fighters pension by the Govt. of India.

The I.N.A. Spy system of Netaji, though was nurtured by the German and Japanese experts, suffered a terrible blow when some secret service men in the Tanjong Bungah of Penang Spy Centre, betrayed and supplied to the British with all useful informations in the West Coast near Karachi. As disclosed by Amrick Singh Gill, these pro-British Agents in the I.N.A. conveyed all the materials, money, explosives and secret codes for the radio transmissions and exact locations where the other groups would disembark from submarines and operate in different areas in India and Ceylon. This resulted in the cruel death of a number of excellent officers and men in Military close-court cases in Lahore, Madras and Calcutta for "Waging War Against The King Emperor." The Japanese Instructors committed suicide in shame when they heard of this betrayal by the I.N.A. personnel trained under them.

Regarding the training programme in Secret Service, the readers may be enlightened with some first hand information from the version of Amrick Singh Gill who was captured and sentenced to die in the gallows. It reads: "Making of simple bombs was the first step towards the grand plan to fight it out with British Imperialism. More sophisticated bombs, including plastic bombs were also used..... each group of 5 was to have one very highly qualified radio and code expert..... some were taken to Medan, Sumatra to carry on with parachute landing practices. These were to be the first to be airflown over Assam and East Bengal. Some were very successful..... a few were unfortunate to be stuck among very tall trees to be rescued by the enemy or were lost for ever in the thick jungles. Overland Route— Landing by Air was very commonly used and most of the trained officers penetrated towards Chittagong and back to base camps with very good and useful information for I.N.A. Headquarters.

"Let us take one example", writes Amrick Singh, "to show how the author and his 5 comrades prepared themselves for this task. When the intensive training was completed, Netaji went through the list of groups and resorted and recast this particular group. Since, this group was to work mostly in Bengal, Assam and help in the future landings on the Orissa coast, three of the 5 were Bengalees. Dr. Pabitra Mohan Roy, Leader, Tuhin

Mukherjee, Mahender Singh—bomb and explosives specialist, Amrick Singh—radio and creating underground cells and meeting Allied camps for special information on army, navy, and airforce activities to be supplied by I.N.A. Agents already in the Allied Army, and S. Sen Gupta. The group was separated to be kept in complete isolation for one week to cut off any scent from the enemy and to revise over the final instructions direct from Netaji and to specialise in 2 codes..... We received goodbye message from Netaji with these words—"Though few in numbers, your mission will have a deadly blow on the entire British secret service. This base in Calcutta must be set up immediately at all costs. etc."

"We moved out quietly and smoothly out of Penang waters, rounded Sumatra, entered the Indian Ocean and headed to Port Blair passing the beautiful Nicobar Islands.....The enemy Agents were well based amongst the harbour workers and had powerful transmitting sets to furnish information to Allied Headquarters in Trincomalee, Madras and Calcutta. Suddenly, I discovered that Tuhin Mukherjee who was to pull out the nylon rope had not done so and it was entangled in the propeller of our small outboard motor. Fortunately, we loosened and cut off the rope and sped off on our journey towards Konark Coast, properly using the stars to guide us. Our motor had a long silencer which almost reduced the noise to a safe limit.....Just before day break we could see the huge colossus of the Konark Sun Temple.....Three cases of powerful plastic bombs, small arms and ammunition, hand-grenades and powerpacks for the transmitters were buried by Mohinder Singh at a place about 25 paces on the South-End wall of the Temple.....Mukherjee and Mohinder were to rendezvous with the rest of the Party at the Metro Cinema along the Esplanade near to the Grand Hotel at Calcutta. Dr. Pabitra Roy and I were like twins and stay as tourists at Puri and remain nearer the coast, our luggage was a gramophone in which concealed the transmitting set and frequency crystals. The other set was concealed in a hookah bottom.....I was to enrol as a student in the George Brown Radio College (Calcutta) to find new contacts and also make a good camouflage. Dr. Pabitra came in a week later. We made our first contact with Haridas Mitra and later Jyotish Bose and

others were introduced to regroup and work with the underground movement based from Behala.¹⁵ Mukherjee disobeyed instructions, went to meet his father-in-law who lost no time in taking him to the British Lal Bazar to claim him reward and keep Mukherjee from the gallows. Mukherjee had exposed our code.

"We were further, exposed to great danger from 12 of the Muslims from the secret service camp in Penang who had received full plans and other information. They surrendered themselves to the British Secret Service. Their two Officers were Col. Durrani and Col. Gilani....." As already said, they were placed at every junction in Calcutta to spot other I.N.A. men. In their utter cleverness, "the British made one mistake. They made these 12 men speak over the All India Radio night after night. This was enough to warn all comrades that danger was breathing down their necks.....From one code we switched to another and operated at different times on different frequencies to prevent detection by enemy. At other times we made use of our powerful transmitters to jam some of the naval and army signals and cause interference on their own frequencies....."¹⁶. With this regard, "The truth was that," observed Hugh Toye,

15 Dr. R.C. MAJÚMDAR WRITES: "They went to Calcutta and were helped by Haridas Mitra, a son-in-law of the family of Subhas Bose and his friend Jyotish Bose. The transmitter was fitted on the roof of the house of Jyotish-Bose near Deshapriya Park. This house on the Bepin Pal Road is separated from that of the writer of this chapter only by a very low wall but he never suspected the existence of the transmitter..... Thus communication was established with Subhas Bose and he regularly received message from India for several months. Later the transmitter was removed to Behala but inspite of all these precautions, the police came to know of the transmission of news. They succeeded in arresting Mahinder Singh and by inhuman torture extracted from him the names of the others just before Singh died of torture.....Tuhin Mukherjee, one of the four.....turned approver and gave evidence against the four accused. The father of Jyotish Bose and the relatives of Haridas Mitra appealed to the Govt. for mercy on behalf of them and approached Mahatma Gandhi who wrote to Viceroy. As a result of this the sentence of death was commuted to transportation for life.....": *The History of the Freedom Movement in India*—Volume III p.p.—594-95.

16 Amrick Singh Gill I.N.A., Malaysia: '*Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and his Secret Service of the Indian National Army*' pp. 7-15 dated 24th January, 1982. (The Writer is indebted to Shri Gill for this unpublished article. After Indian Independence, Shri Gill since serving as a Teacher under Malayasian Govt. at Kuala Lumpur).

“Durrani not only instructed the men to surrender, but gave them intelligence to pass on to the authorities in India. For his part in the escape.....he was awarded the George Cross in 1946”.

Men, money, material and spirit—spirit of unity, faith and sacrifice, the ingredients of the great cause have been obtained. But a central authority is imperative; if it succeeds, it can carry on to the materialisation of the cause it stands for. A Provisional Government is a must as in the modern world of international understanding, it would not only negotiate with another Government on matters of help for finance, armament, equipment, location of bases etc., the recognition of an interim Government by other Nations would give it an International status. And Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, now came forward for the establishment of the *ARZI HAKUMATE AZAD HIND*—the Provisional Government of Free India.

Government and Declaration of War

IN THE EARLIER days, we see the kings indulge in war with their paid commanders and mercenary troops in the conquest or in defence of their countries. In modern history, Shivaji is an exception. He organised, and attacked the mighty Mughals, and established the powerful Marathi State in the Southern India with the help of hardy guerrillas, and George Washington declared Independence and waged war against England and wrested freedom. The readers now enter into a new sphere of history where it will be learnt how the Indians formed themselves into a daring Army and Government outside India, declared war and conducted the same against the then most powerful Imperial Government, well-founded for centuries in the Indian Sub-continent.

Within three months of setting up various departments of the Indian Independence League, in the Headquarters and the Branches, encouraging results were forthcoming. The Officials and workers, with the exception of a few, had little or no experience and only their willingness and enthusiasm commanded them to their new responsibility. Ideas of discipline took shape. After his tour and after watching for some time the working of the Departments, and being assured that the people too were ready to shoulder such a responsibility before the eyes of the world, the matter of inaugurating the Provisional Government was taken up by Netaji Bose in right earnest. 'This was his master stroke', said Major General A.C. Chatterjee. "During our struggle for the freedom of our country in South East Asia, he consulted us about its establishment and finally formed the Cabinet and established the Provisional Government

on the 21st October, 1943, at Singapore with the agreement of Japanese Govt. It is the red letter day in the history of India, when atleast 30 lakhs of Indians had had the first taste of freedom under the banner held high by the noblest and the bravest son of Mother India."

In the presence of the delegates of Malaya, Java, Sumatra, Siam, Indo-China, and Hong Kong, Netaji opened the ceremony which was an outstanding landmark in history. Amidst scenes of unprecedented feelings and emotions, Netaji Bose read the following proclamation and took the oath as follows:

"In the name of God, I take this sacred oath that to liberate India and the thirty eight crores of my countrymen I, Subhas Chandra Bose, will continue this sacred war of freedom till last breath of my life. I shall remain always a servant of India and to look after the welfare of thirty eight crores of my Indian brothers and sisters which shall be my highest duty. Even after winning freedom, I will always be prepared to shed even the last drop of my blood for the preservation of India's freedom".

The duty of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India) was thus described in the proclamation:

"It will be the task of the Provisional Government to launch and to conduct the struggle that will bring about the expulsion of the British and of their allies from the soil of India. It will then be the task of the Provisional Government to bring about the establishment of a permanent National Government of Azad Hind constituted in accordance with the will of the Indian people and enjoying their confidence. After the British and their allies are overthrown and until a permanent National Government of Azad Hind is set up on Indian soil, the Provisional Government will administer the affairs of the country in trust for the Indian people".

The proclamation ended with passionate appeal: "In the name of God.....We call upon the Indian people to rally round our banner and to strike for India's freedom. We call upon them to launch the final struggle against the British and their allies in India and to prosecute the struggle with valour and perseverance and with full faith in final victory until the enemy

is expelled from Indian soil and the Indian people are once again a free nation".¹

The oath taking ceremony, so far Netaji was concerned, was never a subject of formality. "In the face of heavy responsibilities he sincerely swore to devote his whole being, body and spirit, and he steadfastly clung to this oath till his last moment which came in less than two years.....With Indians inside and outside India, friends and foes alike, watching with interest, the Provisional Government of Free India had its glorious birth with that extraordinary personality S.C. Bose as its chief. It created a new determination amongst all Indians to achieve complete freedom. The Provisional Government, set up by Indians themselves went over to the offensive to liberate the 400 million people of India."²

The historical significance of the proclamation illumines Bose's whole life and activities. He had always felt that what India was lacking in her struggle for freedom were two elements—a National Army and a National Government to lead the Army to the war. He thanked the brilliant victories by the Japanese forces which enabled the Indians in East Asia to organise the Independence League and Army. He stressed the point that without the I.N.A., the Azad Hind Government would have been but a mere propaganda and with the formation of the National Army, it became possible, as well as necessary to set up a Provisional Government of Free India. He proclaimed: "The Cabinet will consist of certain members who will represent the civil departments of the Government—While there will be others representing the Armed Forces—Since the purpose of the Government is to fight for independence, the armed forces have been given a large representations on the Cabinet. When the Provisional Government is transferred to Indian soil, it will assume the functions of a normal Government operating in its own territory. Many new departments will then be started.

1 S.A. Ayer: "*The Indian Independence Movement in East Asia*—p. 7.

2 4th Section, Asian Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Japan, August 1956 [free English translation of selected extracts] *Subhas Chandra Bose and Japan—Netaji and India's Freedom*: p. 351.

"It remains now to start the final struggle for freedom. This will begin when the Indian National Army crosses the frontier of India and commences its historic march to Delhi. This march will end only when the Anglo-Americans are expelled from India and the Indian National Flag is hoisted over the Viceroy's House in New Delhi."³

In the grand auditorium of Cathay Cinema at Singapore, in the presence of the delegates of the Indian Independence League representing all the Eastern States of Asia, the Azad Hind Government was inaugurated. 'It was a colourful, impressive scene: the hall hung with banners, slogans, national flags—Bose himself and his Cabinet members with their uniforms—the platform lined with microphones, symbols of power in the world outside: the I.N.A. guards of honour.....greetings from the diplomats and political leaders of the East. All combined to give a sense of reality, of substantial achievement, which the assembly had not seen before. To this was added the strongest emotional appeal. The Government was no puppet—the gift of ten aircraft, the offer of rice for Bengal, spoke for themselves..... For the present, its scope would be limited, military affairs must dominate....."⁴

According to the above, the structure of the Government in the beginning, was simple as set out below revealing its fighting character.

Head of the Government.....	
Head of the Military Department.....	S.C. Bose
Head of the Foreign Affairs Department.....	
Head of Finance Department.....	Anil Chandra Chatterjee
Head of Propaganda Department.....	S. Appadorai Ayer
Head of Women's Department.....	Laxmi Swaminathan

Besides above, Netaji took J.K. Bhonsle, the Commander of I.N.A. and seven others⁵ as Ministers without portfolio. Rash

3 Netaji made the speech in Hindustani and one Mr. Chidambaram, an eminent Lawyer of Singapore interpreted the Proclamation in Tamil.

4 Hugh Toye: *Subhash Chandra Bose (The Springing Tiger)* pp. 98-99.

5 Lt. Col. Aziz Ahmed, Lt. Col. N.S. Bhagat, Lt. Col. Gulzara Singh, Lt. Col. M.Z. Kiani, Lt. Col. A.D. Loganathan, Lt. Col. Eshan Qadir, Lt. Col. Shah Nawaz Khan (Representatives of Armed Force), Karim Gani, Debnath Das, D.N. Khan, A. Yellappa, John A. Thivy, Sardar Ishar Singh (Advisers), A.N. Sarkar (Legal Adviser).

Behari Bose was appointed the Supreme Adviser of the Government and Ananda Mohan Sahay as the Secretary with ministerial rank. It is also to be noted that, the I.N.A. was subordinated to the Government and Netaji took charge of the Armed forces as the Supreme Commander.

'After spending so many years', writes John A. Thivy, 'in the service of the country, planning for just this day when, with the backing of all overseas Indians, and under the aegis of the Provisional Government, he was to lead the Army of India's Liberation he did visualise the travail India will have to go through before final victory is won. There was not a dry eye in that assembly. The silence was broken by unrestrainable sobs. The strain was terrific..... Netaji recovered his equilibrium, and with a firm voice, finished his sacred oath. Then, the Ministers and Advisers, one by one stepped up to the Head of State and took their oath to serve faithfully the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, under the leadership of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.....'⁶ The entire proceedings were punctuated with tumultuous outbursts of cheering and shouts of "Subhas Bose Ki Jai", "Azad Hukumat Ki Jai", and "Azad Hind Ki Jai".

The Office bearers and the Members of the Staff of the Independence League and of the public took their oath on the days that followed, in different branches of the League in East Asia and each person received a card, in which was printed the words of the oath, it bore the signature of the recipient and that of the Official who administered the same. 'The possessor of this card enjoyed the same privileges, and was required to perform the same duties, that the former membership card entitled him to, with the added right to be known as a free citizen of India!'⁷

The Japanese officials gave vent to their expression that the establishment of the Azad Hind Government was an original idea of Netaji and he had spoken about it on many occasions. The formation of the Cabinet was not, therefore, unexpected, but the proclamation of the actual establishment had a great

6 John A. Thivy: *The Struggle in East Asia* (Late Mr. John A. Thivy, a Minister of Azad Hind Government, wrote this account—*The Struggle in East Asia* in Hanoi in Sept.-Oct. 1945, for distribution among the Indian Officers and other ranks of the British Army then entering East Asia following upon the surrender of Japan.

7 Ibid p. 66

impact inside and outside India. More than anything else the birth of an interim Government of Free India struck the Indians and the Britishers alike in India as a new reality. When informed of the establishment of the Azad Hind Government, the repercussion on the Government of Japan was as follows:

“Having come to know that the Provisional Government of Free India has been established with S.C. Bose as it's head, the Imperial Government, convinced that it marks a great advance on the road of complete independence which Indians have ardently desired for many years, hereby recognizes this as the Provisional Government of Free India and declares that all necessary help and co-operation will be given to it.”

The first Cabinet meeting of the Azad Hind was held at the same night of the formation of the Cabinet, and its second—another historic session, held on the night of October 22, resolved at 12 O'clock midnight, to declare war against the Anglo-American Powers. Even to a militarist Government of strong foundation, it might appear to be rather audacious to take action at such a sweeping speed. But as an ever-brilliant, ever a master strategist, Netaji, authorised by his Government of Azad Hind, declared war on Britain and the United States of America at 05 minutes past midnight on October 23, 1943. The Declaration of War was broadcast over the Indian Independence League Headquarters' Radio Station at Singapore by the Head of the State. Within two hours, San Francisco gave out this information over its Radio. India and the World were startled, a strikingly new dimension was added to the Second World War. India, a century old enslaved nation, at last woke up from slumber and unsheathed its sword, challenged the mighty enemy. A new faith and fervour, a new philosophy generated in millions of dried up, and despairing hearts of the Indians. Netaji proved to the world that India is still a land of valour and prowess, that India has still in her that sense of national honour for the preservation and perpetuation for which the forefathers had shed their blood. Thus, the 2 million overseas Indians and the Indian National Army as a single fighting unit turned two great Governments like U.K. and U.S.A. into their enemies immediately after they had announced themselves as free.

"This declaration of war," promised Netaji, "is not a propaganda stunt. We shall prove by our actions that we mean what we say.....When the Azad Hind Fauj launches its fight it will do so under the leadership of its own Government. India's liberation shall be achieved by Indian efforts and sacrifices of her own Fauj". The I.N.A. troops and the civilians as well, got excited and with their arms raised above their heads and holding rifles aloft they danced and shouted. "If there were any proof required of personal magnetism and hypnotic influence over a huge mass of humanity," says Major General A.C. Chatterjee, "it was here that it was conclusively demonstrated.....It was a sight unique in history of any nation in the world." Netaji wanted the Indian people to ratify the Government's decision of declaration of War. But the assembly of over fifty thousand people welcomed the war declaration in such a fashion that it seemed, the entire mass had gone mad. On October 24, Netaji in his imposing military uniform delivered his first public address as the Head of Provisional Government of Free India. According to Major General Shah Nawaz Khan, the scene was never to be forgotten in life time, some members of Rani Jhansi Regiment who fell almost unconscious on the ground, had their hands raised high in firm grips, and 'Chalo Delhi', 'On to Delhi', on their lips.

The Special Edition of *The Syonan Sinbun* in Singapore published on October 24, 1943, with the caption on its front page: 'Provisional Azad Hind Government Declared War On Britain and U.S.A. Nippon thanked for full co-operation and assistance Imperial Forces in Nampo will give all out support to I.N.A. The Provisional Government of Azad Hind declared war on Britain and the United States early this morning according to a communique from the Headquarters...The Imperial Forces in the South have no hesitation to support with all means at our disposal our young comrades, the Indian National Army, declared Lieut. Col. Nakajima, Chief of the Press Section of the Imperial Forces in Nampo in a statement issued at 10 O' clock this morning in connection with the declaration of war on Britain and the United States by the Provisional Government of Azad Hind.'"⁸

8 *The Syonan Sinbun* (Special Edition) Sunday, October 24, 1943, Office 140/146, Cecil Street, Syonan (Singapore)

The Southern Army of Japan, with Field Marshal Terauchi as its Commander, expressed its determination to undergo the same suffering as comrades-in-arms in the attack against the Anglo-American allies as announced by I.N.A. The Southern Army further declared: ".....We have repeated again and again that Japan has no territorial or economic ambitions whatever and we believe that the Indians themselves have fully recognized this fact....." This fact clearly explodes the basic misconception that the character of the Provisional Government of Free India and its declaration of war against the British, simply supported the ambitions of Japan. The misconception led to doubts and lack of faith among a section of Indian (Jawaharlal Nehru and Communist Leaders) and it was brought about entirely by British propaganda.⁹

The Government of Azad Hind did not declare war on Soviet Russia although Russia was an ally of Britain, because the latter did not give any direct support to the British authorities in India. Even in the later stages of the Second World War in Greater East Asia, when Russia attacked Japan, the Provisional Government did not consider it sufficient to declare war on Russia. The Soviet Government, on the contrary, had indicated her sympathies for India when Molotov, the Foreign Minister of Russia declared at the Washington Security Conference, that Russia would like to hear the voice of Free India in future conferences. Besides, Netaji had cherished the noble ideology in him that Russia being a socialist state, must help and co-operate with India's national reconstruction programme when the latter gained her independence.

International recognition was accorded to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind by the Governments of, as many as nine countries of the world, which is as follows:

1. Imperial Government of Japan: Foreign Minister Momoru Shigemetsu: On October 23, 1943.
2. Government of Burma: On October 24, 1943.
3. Croatia: On October 27, 1943 (After Second World War this country lost its independent status merged with Yugoslavia, and in 1991 struggling to regain the same).

⁹ Appendix:- *Subhas Chandra Bose and Japan*: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Government of Japan *Netaji and India's Freedom* p. 357.

4. Germany: Herr Von Ribbentrop, Foreign Minister of the Reich through German Ambassador in Japan: On October 29, 1943.
5. China (Nanking Government) Chinese National Government: On November 1, 1943.
6. Manchukuo: On November 1, 1943.
7. Republic of Italy: Signor Mussolini: On November 9, 1943.
8. Thailand: On November 19, 1943.
9. Philippines.

Eamon de Valera, President of the Irish Free State sent his personal cordial felicitations to Netaji on the occasion of the formation of the Azad Hind Government.

The Official document of Britain placed on record (released 30 years later) as follows:

"After the conquest by Japan of the French and Dutch possessions in South-East Asia and the fall of Burma, Malaya and Singapore, there arose a great desire in the minds of Indian inhabitants of these countries to organise themselves not only for their own defence and protection, but also for active participation in the movement of liberation of their home country from foreign rule... A Provisional Government of Free India is reported to have been eventually set up, and a well-organised, well-trained and well-disciplined Indian Army operated under its control.....This Government was not a mere puppet Government under Japanese control, but was an independent Government with a definite international status!"¹⁰

The Indian National Army began preparation in dead earnest. Training of personnel was speeded up. The composition of the National Army at this time was (i) Headquarters, (ii) Hindustan Field Group, (iii) 'Sherdil' Guerrilla Group, (iv) Special Service Group, (v) Intelligence Group, (vi) Reinforcement Group. The I/HIND Field Group consisted of the Headquarters, I, II, and III Infantry battalions, I.A.F.V. Battalions, I Heavy Gun Battalion, No. I Engineering Coy. No. I Signal Coy., No. I Medical Coy. The Sherdil Guerrilla Group consisted of the Gandhi Guerrilla

10 *The Transfer of Power 1942-47. Volume VI: Page 342. August 1, 1942—March 22, 1946* (London Her Majesty's Stationary Office 1973)

Regiment, Azad Guerrilla Regiment and Nehru Guerrilla Regiment. In or about November 1943, another Guerrilla Regiment was formed which was officially known as No. I Guerrilla Regiment. In spite of the objection registered by Netaji, the Officers and Jawans of the I.N.A. christened this No. I Regiment as Subhas Regiment, and Shah Nawaz Khan was appointed its commander. The other three Regiments as stated above, were numbered 2 (Gandhi), 3 (Azad) and 4 (Nehru), and they were all incorporated in No. I Division.

Accompanied by Major General J.K. Bhonsle, the Chief of Staff, Mr. S.A. Ayer, the Minister of Publicity and propaganda, Mr. A.M. Sahay, the Secretary to the Government and Major Abid Hassan, Netaji flew to Tokyo to attend the conference of Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. India being outside the sphere, Netaji was an observer in the Conference held on November 5-6, 1943, but it is evident that, none of the delegates in the historic gathering matched him in calibre. While thanking the representative of the Nations of East Asia, Netaji said:

‘.....My thoughts also went back to the Assembly of the League of Nations, the League of Nations along whose corridors and lobbies I spent many a day, knocking at one door after another, in vain attempt to obtain a hearing for the cause of Indian freedom.....This is not a conference for hatching a conspiracy to victimise a weak power, nor is it a conference for trying to defraud a weak neighbour. This is an assembly of liberated nations, as assembly are determined to make the fullest use of this opportunity for achieving the final emancipation of our country’.¹¹ Prime Minister General Tojo of Japan concluded the conference with reference to the Azad Hind in the following terms:

‘.....In view of the fact that the Provisional Government of Free India has now been firmly established and Indian patriots have closed their ranks and rallied round the Provisional Government of Free India, thereby strengthening its position, I would like to announce here and now that Japan is ready to transfer the Andaman and the Nicobar Islands to the Provisional Government of Free India.....’

11. *Said Subhas Bose*—Ed. Amar Lahiri: Calcutta 1947—pp. 43-53.

For India and the Indians, the acquisition of the territories of the Islands, made the Azad Hind Government a reality, a national entity in fact, as well as in name. The liberation of the Andamans and Nicobar had a symbolic significance too. From the very inception of the revolutionary nationalist movements, the diehard Indian political prisoners had been deported to the Cellular Jail at the Port Blair to rot, to cripple, to die under most brutal treatment of the British Officers. Just as the revolutionaries in France first broke open the ill-famed Bastille in Paris and set free the political prisoners in 1789, the Andamans were first to be liberated in India's War of Independence. "Part by part, Indian territory will be liberated," said Netaji, "but it is always the first plot of land that holds the most significance.....we have renamed Andamans as 'Saheed' in memory of the martyrs and the Nicobars as 'Swaraj'.

Netaji secured agreement from General Sugiyama, the Army Chief of Staff that in the coming invasion to British India, the I.N.A. would rank as an Allied Army under Japanese operational command, and that Japanese would remain financially responsible for the ex-prisoners of war in the I.N.A. whereas, Netaji would be liable for payment to his civilian recruits. He now flew from Tokyo to Nanking on an invitation extended by its leader Wang Ching Wei. Thence to Shanghai, China's then largest commercial port. He met a good number of Indian residents there and many young Indians volunteered to join the I.N.A. He inspected the I.N.A. recruits who hailed mainly from the Sikh Police community in China, and his historic visit to the Sun-Yat-Sen Mausoleum near Nanking was greatly appreciated by all.

It may be conveniently said that as a statesman and as a leader of the world order, Netaji had clear ideas in respect of the Anglo American complicity with Marshal Chiang Kai Shek. He vehemently condemned the movement of the Chinese forces towards Indo-Burmese frontier. He asked, "Whether any nationalist or patriot should help Chiang Kai Shek with weapons to fight against India which till now had nothing but friendly feelings towards China and Chiang Kai Shek. His army was a hired army of the British and if the Chinese forces should ever fight us, Chiang Kai Shek would never be pardoned."

Netaji's efficient move at the Greater East Asia conference, and later on his propaganda advantages both at home and abroad, secured for the Government of Azad Hind, the full support to his main objective of attacking the British. But, many basic conditions still remained to be complied with as to the question of (1) Organisation, equipment and training of his Army, (2) the internal condition of India and (3) the pressing problems of co-ordination of the plan and strategy of the I.N.A. with those of the Japanese armed forces. He also stressed upon the point of Civil administration of the Indian territories after I.N.A. sets foot on Indian soil. Major General A.C. Chatterjee, who was recruited from the Indian Medical Service was put in charge of this department as a Cabinet Minister of the Provisional Government. Netaji appointed him as the Governor of the newly liberated territories later on. The Government, along with other areas, acquired a territory of Ziawadi, about 50 square miles in area with a population of some 15,000 Indians, and that it administered for four to six months, the Manipur and Bishenpur areas covering some 1,500 square miles. The village was taken as the Unit with each village in the charge of a *Mondol* or *Mukhia*, each village having a Panchayat. These Panchayats were responsible for supervision and execution of works pertaining to sanitation, water supply, education and settlement of boundary disputes. All rent cases and also criminal cases of threat, assault, theft of property, cattle, crop, defamation etc. were dealt with by the village Panchayats.

A 'Reconstruction College' was set up in Singapore with an Indian ex-Magistrate to train up the administrators in Civil affairs and relief works in liberated area. Netaji instituted Sub-Committees to study and work out the principles for abolition of communalism in Free India—the national unification, procedure of medals¹² and pensions for the I.N.A.

12 Decorations and Medals introduced for Armed Forces were:

1. Saheed-e-Bharat, 2. Sher-e-Hind, 3. Sardar-e-Jang, 4. Vir-e-Hind, 5. Tamgha-e-Bahaduri, 6. Tamgha-e-Shatrunash.

[The equivalent gallantry decorations and Medals of India to-day are: 1. Param Vir Chakra, 2. Maha Vir Chakra, 3. Vir Chakra, 4. Ashoka Chakra, 5. Kirti Chakra, 6. Sourja Chakra].

For civilians, three such Honours, the highest being the Shevak-e-Hind were introduced in the Azad Hind Government.

men and their successors, the design of Bank notes of the Provisional Government. It was agreed that 'Hindustani' in Roman script should be the common language of India. The Communalism of British Indian Army found no place in the I.N.A. "There was no discrimination in the food given to men and the Officers. Even Netaji ate the same food. The I.N.A. had only one kitchen where Hindus, Sikhs, Mohamadans and all others ate together.

The I.N.A. was regularly paid and the pay of men did not differ from what the British Indian troops were to get. The Officers, however, drew very much less. Lieutenants got Rs. 80 per month, Captains Rs. 125, Majors Rs. 180 in Malaya and Rs. 230 in Burma. Lt. Colonels Rs. 330 and Colonels Rs. 400..."¹³

The Flag of the I.N.A. was that of the Congress tricolour with the emblem of the Leaping Tiger on it, and the salute and greetings "Jai Hind", whereas, Rabindranath Tagore's poem "Janagana Mana Adhinayaka" was adopted as the National Anthem.

It was decided in the Cabinet meetings from time to time, to send I.N.A. troops to Burma, the First Division to move as early as possible. The Units, which were reformed and reorganised, started to move both from Singapore and from the mainland of Malaya. They proceeded by train, but beyond the Malayan peninsula, part of the journey was made by train and part on foot and several troops by boat and by motor trucks. The march of the Indian National Army, in many routes had to be undertaken through areas severely infested with Malaria. The Headquarters of the Government of Azad Hind and of the Indian Independence League moved to Rangoon soon after Netaji returned to the Burmese capital on January 7, 1944, with the key members of his cabinet. The decision to launch an offensive in Burma was not finally taken up until General Mutaguchi, Commander of the Japanese forces was convinced that Imphal should be attacked. Netaji and the Japanese

13 Kusum Nair: *The Story of I.N.A.* p. 29 (K. Nair, Editor of the National Press Syndicate and co-author with Ashoka Mehta of the Simla Triangle (1945) published 'The Story of INA' in January 1946).

Commander-in-Chief, Lt. General Kawabe discussed and worked out the strategy operation of the 'Operation U!'

The 4th Regiment—'Subhas Brigade' was ordered to move to Burma for assault under Lt. Col. (Later Major General) Shah Nawaz Khan. The First Division of Lt. Col. (Later Major General) M.Z. Kiani, consisting of the three guerrilla regiments—'Gandhi', 'Nehru' and 'Azad', as given out before, was signalled to proceed. The troops were given a great send-off at the Singapore railway station and grand receptions at all other intermediate stations—Kuala Lampur, Penang, Hidijai, Chumphon, Ye, Moulmein.

Three thousand soldiers of the Subhas Brigade, I.N.A. Advance Guard, were in the offensive. The Japanese strength in Burma was 2,30,000. On January 24, 1944, Netaji accepted two trial roles for it. The First Battalion of the I.N.A. was to form part of the army opposing the British West African Division in the Kaladan Valley, while the other two Battalions were to relieve the Japanese Battalion in the routes over the Chin Hills.

The Imphal Operation was the final offensive of the East Asia War, mounted by three Burma-based Japanese Divisions and one I.N.A. Division. Imphal, the state capital of the Indian State of Manipur, was the main Headquarters of the Anglo-American base near Burmese border. Lt. General Mutaguchi who had been appointed the Commander of Japanese Fifteenth Army in March, 1943, pressed for an attack to destroy the Imphal garrison of the Anglo-American Allies. During this time, the Japanese had been on the defensive, and passing through a crisis in the Pacific fronts. In the situation, the Imperial Headquarters at Tokyo was keen to produce a spectacular victory in the Burma-Indian front to offset the effects on Japanese national morale on the consequential defeat in the Pacific. Netaji strongly favoured attacking the British India by the Indian National Army. It is also believed by a good number of Japanese authorities later, that the 'Imphal operation' was a brain-child of Netaji, who with his tremendous influence dragged the Japanese military into the disastrous adventure¹⁴.

14 A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose Bose/Werth/Ayer: *A Beacon Across Asia* p. 198

General Tojo's sanction of the 'Operation U', that is Imphal campaign, was obtained and the execution orders became official not before the 7th January, 1944. This decision coincided with the entry of Provisional Government of Free India into Rangoon with a vanguard unit of the I.N.A. Lt. General Masakazu Kawabe, Commanding General of the overall Burma fronts held a welcome party in honour of Netaji, the Head of State of Azad Hind. Netaji said his concluding words in the reception given by the Japanese and the Burmese Staff: "My only prayer to the Almighty at this moment is that we may be given the earliest opportunity to pay for our freedom with our own blood." This marvellous utterance coming from the innermost soul of Netaji moved General Kawabe, his Military Commanders very deeply; President Dr. Ba. Maw and Aung San, the Burmese leaders, who so far remained inept and recalcitrant, at once turned to be the devoted friends of Netaji. In this fateful hour, the Japanese—Indian—Burmese Military co-ordination group was set up for invasion of India—'On to Delhi'.

Netaji wanted to select a number of officers, men and women who would pledge to take up dangerous works in the service of India. The assignment required a very steady mind, determined courage and complete fearlessness in facing death. The persons would be formed into Suicide Squads. He called for volunteers and he was amazed to see that there was excellent response, and particularly that of the members from the Rani Jhansi Regiment which he inaugurated on October 22, 1943, a day earlier to the declaration of war. He explained to them the dangers involved, that they would never allow themselves to be captured alive, and in case of their capture, they would be subjected to the utmost torture and finally killed—they pledged to do their utmost to complete the task entrusted to them. They assured Netaji that they would bear the torture cheerfully and face death bravely. To have the assurance made clearer, they were again asked if they could stand the privations that they were likely to undergo, and ultimately meet death. The members of the Rani Jhansi Regiment were unanimous in their reply that they had left their homes knowingly, the sorrows and sufferings of the battlefield they were to come across, and the privation and

death, the ultimate end. Besides Col. (Dr.) Laxmi Swaminathan, the Commander of the Regiment, a Women's Branch was established with Bela Mukherjee as its Secretary, Indefatigable in her action, Ms. Mukherjee proved to be one of the worthiest members in the I.N.A. in the works of publicity, recruitment, collection of fund and material, and by far the best in her wonderful service in the field hospitals.

Notwithstanding his ceaseless preoccupations, both Military and Civil, Netaji spent the whole day with the Subhas Regiment. He reviewed the parade, talked to its Officers and men. His magical power he exerted now on the Army in a way that he had not attempted everbefore. The Supreme Commander saw and foresaw his comrades in arms who were to uphold the honour of Mother India in the field of battle at the price of their life. Like the rising sun it was to shatter the dark cloud of bondage of a great nation for hundreds of years, and he stood like a blazing sword piercing all fears, penetrating courage and confidence in the heart of thousands. He was face to face with his men, and bade them a moving send off to the front, on February 3, 1944:

".....There, there in the distance.....beyond that river, beyond those jungles, beyond those hills, lies the promised land.....the soil from which we sprang.....the land to which we shall now return. Hark! India is calling.....India's metropolis Delhi is calling. Three hundred and eighty eight millions of our countrymen are calling. Blood is calling to blood. Get up. We have no time to lose. Take up your arms. There in front of you, is the road that our pioneers have built. We shall march along that road. We shall carve our way through the enemy's ranks for if God wills, we shall die martyr's death. And in our last sleep we shall kiss the road that will bring our Army to Delhi. The road to Delhi is the road to freedom. "Chalo Delhi".

This road to Delhi, as will be seen, was strewn with blood, sweat and sacrifice.

VI

Assault

WHILE LEADING HIS army to the warfront, the Supreme Commander of the National Army warned, in the question of India's independence, they were to trust no one, not even the allies, the Japanese: "If you ever find the Japanese trying to establish any type of control over India, turn round and fight them as vigorously as you will fight the British." It is in this context, the moral, spiritual and national consciousness that the great sense of total sacrifice became the propelling force of the whole affair and the people in South-East Asia, at the call of the towering personality of their leader Netaji Bose, smilingly marched through the blood-bath and fire of liberation. Japan looked to him with awe and reverence.

At last the zero hour was reached, on February 4, 1944, the I.N.A. offensive was launched in the wild regions of the Arakan mountains. With extraordinary speed, it cut off the 7th British Indian Division in the Mayu Valley under Lt. Col. L.S. Misra, the I.N.A. Commander and Major Mehar Das. The Azad Hind Fauj fought fearlessly and tried to win over as many Indian soldiers as possible from the British Indian Army but their own ration-shortage compelled them to release the prisoners. Ultimately, the 7th Division of the British was completely besieged and annihilated. Buthiadong, the strong advance base of the enemy was occupied. Lt. Hari Singh won the Sher-e-Hind medal in this sector for his gallantry—he put to death seven British soldiers single-handed.

A section of the troops of the 1st Brigade moved upto Prome from Rangoon under Major Raturi, Sardar-e-Jang. On receipt of the intelligence that the West African Division of the British Army was trying to cross over from the western bank of Kaladan river to its east bank, Major Raturi marched forward

and attacked the enemy. After a fierce hand-to-hand fight during the night, the enemy fled and while trying to recross the river, they lost a number of boats at the hand of the I.N.A. With the arrival of the Japanese contingents, they then occupied Paletwa and later, Daletine. And only 40 miles off from the place to the west, there lies the frontier of India—the dreamland! Mowdak, the nearest British post! Major Raturi, almost without rest, stormed a surprise night attack forcing the enemy to flee away leaving behind a handsome quantity of store including rations for his contingents to capture and enjoy with.

Netaji called this success in the Arakan front as an 'active and important' piece of endeavour. He issued the Special Order of the Day on February 9, 1944:

'The eyes of the whole world are focussed on the Arakan Front where events of far-reaching consequence are taking place today. The glorious and brilliant actions of the brave units of Azad Hind Fauj working in close concert with the forces of the Imperial Nippon Army, have helped to foil all attempts by the Anglo-American forces to start a counter-offensive in this sector... Our long awaited march to Delhi has begun, and with grim determination, we shall continue that march until the tricolour National Flag flying over Arakan mountains is hoisted over the Viceregal Lodge...Comrades, Officers and men of India's Army of Liberation, let there be the one solemn resolve in our hearts—'Either Liberty or Death'. And let there be but one slogan on your lips—"Onward to Delhi".

As the Head of the State, Netaji presented five sea-planes for military use to Japan in January and again in March, '44, as an expression of gratitude, for the help and co-operation, given by the Government of Thailand and its people for the cause of Indian independence, he presented one million 'baths' to that Government through the Thai branch of Indian Independence League. 'These and similar acts, Japanese Foreign Ministry recorded,' were no doubt an expression of his sincere feelings. At the same time he wanted to impress upon the people of India and abroad that the financial base of his Provisional Government was firmly established'.

In this stage of our study, it should be pertinent to discuss that, the I.N.A. held its independent character during the action. Major General Shah Nawaz Khan, who commanded the Subhas Brigade, gave out: ".....Although we had a common strategy with the Japanese Army, we had our own independent sectors of the front, where I.N.A. sectors units operated entirely by themselves. There was no Japanese central direction within the I.N.A. Some critics of I.N.A. used to say over the All India Radio that since it was working in co-operation with the Japanese it was a "puppet" force. Netaji's reply to this was that the British and French Armies were fighting under exactly the same conditions in France under the command of Gen. Eisenhower. If the British could accept the strategy dictated by the Americans, then how could they criticise the I.N.A.?"¹

During the Second World War, the South East Asia Command (SEAC) maintained an Intelligence Department at Kandy in Ceylon. It had a 'Top Secret' file, namely 'Chandra Bose' file. The Political Warfare Division of the SEAC used to monitor Netaji's radio broadcast every day. British Brigadier Charles Wingate, an authority of the Guerrilla Warfare, was the overall commander of the Allied Intelligence and responsible for the airborne expedition to Upper Burma. It is believed, the British did their best not to allow the Japanese Imperial Headquarters to be friendly with the Government of Azad Hind of Netaji Bose. To that effect, the British propaganda machinery worked vehemently, but thanks to Bose's shrewd strategy and farsight, he could pick it up as he faced embarrassment now and then from the Japanese end. It is also presumed, the British war department left behind a number of their agents among the Indian troops joining the 1st I.N.A. Those Indian spies contacted the 'Chindits'—the guerrillas under Brigadier Wingate, who was successful in causing political resistance against Japanese Army through his M1-2 by way of extending secret help to Chin Pen in Malaya, La Duan in Vietnam and Aung Sun in Burma. Netaji, aware of all these along with many of his independent considerations of the future developments, had been able to

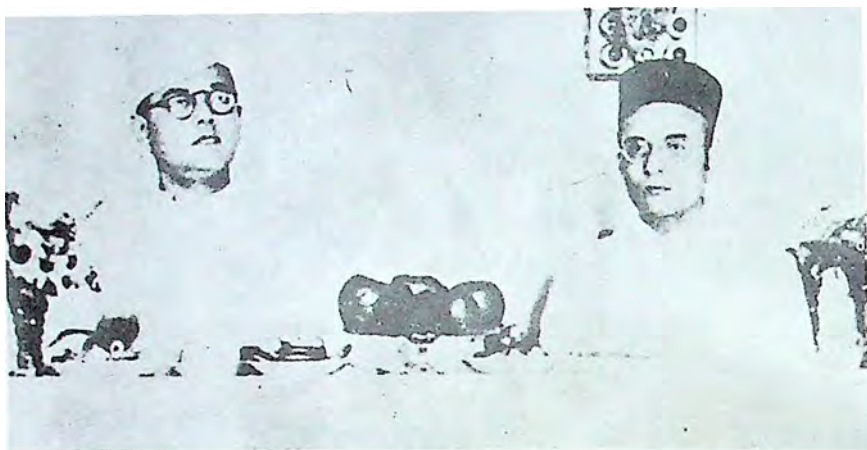
1 Maj. General Shah Nawaz Khan: *Netaji His Life and Work*: p-XI Ed. S.R. Sharma—1948.



Subhas Chandra Bose with Gandhiji at the Haripura Congress Session in 1938.



Netaji with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Priyadarshini.



Last meeting with Veer Savarkar before Subhas Chandra Bose left India in 1941.



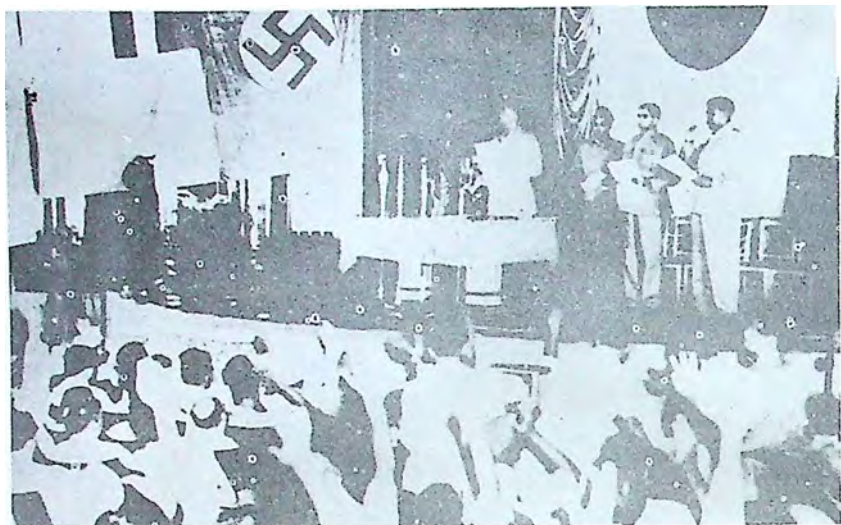
On the deck of the submarine during his voyage from Europe to East Asia. Feb.-May 1943.



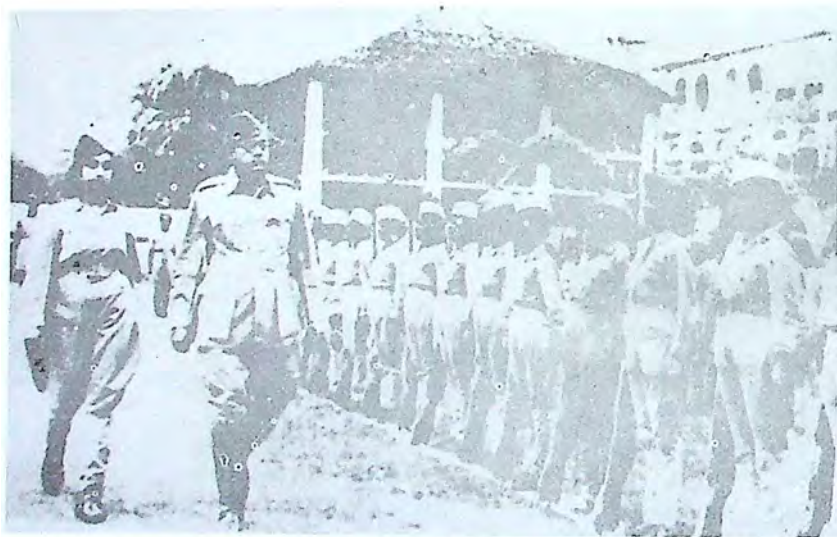
Netaji addressing the Assembly of Asiatic Nations in Tokyo, November, 1943.



Netaji with Rash Behari Bose (on the left) on arrival at Singapore from Germany at the formation of Indian National Army.



Subhas Chandra Bose addressing Indians who had been made prisoners of war.



Netaji inspecting the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, Singapore, October, 1943.



Netaji with the Council of Ministers of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and Advisers. October 21, 1943, Singapore.



Netaji and the Generals enjoying sports of the I.N.A. troops and personnel at Singapore, 1944.



Netaji reviewing the first parade of I.N.A. at Singapore, July, 1943. Maj-Gen. M.Z. Kiani is in the left of Netaji.



Netaji inspecting an artillery unit of I.N.A. 1944.



Netaji's farewell in Japan, 1945.



Netaji at Saigon Airport on August 17, 1945. This is the last available photograph of Netaji.

make his separate Command of the I.N.A. with express agreement of the Japanese Headquarters. And the British Intelligence M1-2, was supposed to have lost it's diplomatic battle of creating breach between Netaji and Jap-High Command.² And we have seen how Netaji moved his Government and the Army to the Indo-Burma border alongside the Japanese.

It is important to remember that Churchill, the Prime Minister and War Minister of Britain, with his Army Chief Ismey, communicated to General Slim, the Supreme Commander of the Eastern theatre, that, there was no possibility of Japanese invasion in the Burma area through the 700-mile Anglo-American War-zone. When General Slim was explaining this with great satisfaction before his subordinate commanders saying, 'danger of Invasion of India by Japanese had passed', Lt. General Mutaguchi's order, by that time, had already reached General Kawabe, to march forward with the I.N.A. over Kohima and Imphal, and Netaji had proclaimed 'Liberty or death, Onward to Delhi'. It is also very interesting that the British allies got panicky at this information, and actual scuffle³ ensued between the British and the American Commanders, Mountbatten being charged for his delay in his Burma campaign.

Mountbatten flew to New Delhi, wired to London and contacted Washington for immediate supply of Air Crafts from the War front of China. The British authorities who snared at the I.N.A. as the propagandists, now became bewildered for the rescue of the 1,50,000 troops of their allied Army, besieged by the Indian National Army and the Japanese in Imphal. It is the

2 Mr. Shibaprasad Choudhury, employed as the French Interpreter in the Anglo-American Allied Army at Kandy, was transferred to the Political Warfare Division of the SEAC. He spied into the CHANDRA BOSE file during the Second World War and has given out his thrilling experiences and information in the thesis—'Netaji File' (*Paribartan*): Bengali Journal No. 26 January, 1983.

3 'There was hurling of words by signal urgent To Chiefs of Staff in Washington—Britain..... Meanwhile Mount was busy with own plan. An Offensive into Burma of long penetration..... U.S. Military authorities viewed with pain Mount's failure to open Burma campaign'. Sanasam Gourhari Singh: *Manipur And World War II* (in verse) Vol-II: p-87 (Opening page of this book with Lord Mountbatten's felicitation)

genius of Netaji Bose—his excellent feat of political diplomacy and marvellous understanding of the international war situation that forced both the Axis and Allied camps to get involved in the fierce battle at the Eastern gate of India which paved the way for opening the road to Delhi.

The valiant men of the Indian National Army turned wild with joy and jubilation when they set their feet on the sacred soil of their Motherland. They threw themselves prostrated on the ground and kissed the soil, for the liberation of which, they staked their lives. They went on shouting with joy and sang their National Anthem, they composed for Azad Hind Fauj. The 'Bahadur Group' passed through Tiddim, Moirang went on as far as Bishenpur. Col. S.A. Malik, the commander of this unit received enthusiastic welcome and support of the people of Manipur. A good number of British—Indian troops surrendered, and for the splendid job done in the area, Netaji awarded Col. Malik, the honour of Sardar-e-Jang.⁴

We may set our lens to the past decades of India's history. Gandhiji had not been allowed to enter into this Princely State of Manipur in British India and set up the organisation of the National Congress, and that Rabindranath Tagore, a State guest, turned back from the border of Manipur as a protest against the Governmental vanity to obtain the clearance from the police authority for entry into the territory. History was made when the Indian National Army of the Azad Hind Government headed by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose exploded the myth of the British Indian Empire by driving out the Imperial Army from this area of the Indian sub-continent. Netaji had, by the time, declared the Indian Legion in Europe to be the part of the I.N.A., and appointed A.C.N. Nambiar to be a Minister in the Provisional Government; his Army was on Indian soil with firm foothold, Imphal seemed very near.

It is hard to assess in full, the great morale of the I.N.A. officers and men on the field of battle. Innumerable history of bravery and heroism is there. A few of these should be related

4 On April 14, 1944, Col. S.A. Malik, the I.N.A. Commander hoisted the tri-colour National Flag of India at the historic Moirang Kangla near Imphal on the liberated area of Manipur, on behalf of the Provisional Government of Free India.

here. The heroism was displayed by Captain Rao, Lt. Mansukh Lal and Lt. Ajaib Singh in successfully defending their Regimental Headquarters under Col. I.J. Kiani of the Gandhi Regiment. They beat back, against heavy odds, the determined attacks of the enemy most gloriously. 'Lt. Mansukh Lal', records Major General A.C. Chatterjee, 'had already thirteen bullet wounds on his body when he made the brilliant final charge with his men to capture the hill position on which depended the safety of the Regimental Headquarters. In this battle, 600 men of the Azad Hind Fauj successfully battled against nearly 3000 soldiers of the British who had superior arms and equipment'.

It is on record, on account of the shortage of rations, the I.N.A. troops had to take to cooking grass, roots and leaves of some trees that were available. The Nagas and the Cacharis, who hated the British and the Japanese alike, gave the Azad Hind every possible help with food despite of their own scarcity. They revered Netaji as their King and did their best for the Azad Hind Fauj even enlisting themselves in the I.N.A. 32 Meiteis who turned Burmese Nationals, joined the I.N.A. under the leadership of L. Guno Singh, Khurai Manipur. A large number of Manipuri tribals who were erstwhile British V. Force also joined and took part in the war against the British Army. "The supply of ration for about 1 lakh Indo-Japanese army for 3 months," observes Mr. Koireng Singh, the first Chief Minister of Manipur, "is not a small contribution of Manipuries to the war effort... In the month of July 1944, 20 Manipuries left for Rangoon when retreat order came.....when they reached Rangoon, Netaji introduced them in a mass Assembly. Laisran Irabot Singh, Khumbongmayum Jugeswar Singh and Irom Tombi Singh joined the active service of the I.N.A. and Keinya Devi and Randhoni Debi joined the Jhansi Rani Regiment".⁵ The great militant tribal leader Fizo who joined the Japanese Army, had now included himself in the I.N.A. alongwith his son when Netaji invaded British India.

There was complete lack of transport for rice-bags, ammunition and other materials. All these had to be carried on

5 M. Koireng Singh: *Manipur's Contribution to the Freedom Struggle of the I.N.A.* (paper in the National Seminar on 'Netaji and I.N.A.', 20.12.85).

the backs of the soldiers for 10 to 15 miles on the mountainous and jungle path. The plight resulted not only in the men breaking down with fatigue but a large number of them had to be withdrawn from the fighting lines. This had been disheartening. The Japanese command had promised telephones or wireless communication facilities but they failed to supply them in many sectors. Runners had to be despatched for 30 to 40 miles to communicate and back with urgent messages of war. Lt. Col. Fujiwara made profuse apologies for the lack of rations and absence of suitable transport and promised his utmost to remedy the situation. In spite of all these terrible adversaries in the front, the I.N.A. troops presented themselves with exemplary heroism—better to say, inexplicable spirit of nationalism with their sacrifices.

Major General Shah Nawaz Khan of the Subhas Brigade states: "I made up my mind to fight even against my brother if he stood in my way and in the actual fight that followed in 1944, we actually fought against each other. He was wounded. My cousin and I were fighting each other in the Chin Hills almost daily for two months.....the question before me was the King or the country. I decided to be loyal to my country and gave my word of honour to Netaji that I would sacrifice myself for her sake."⁶ Examples of individual bravery were innumerable but I can not refrain myself from reproduction of the account of the 'Charge of the Immortals' as was submitted by Lt. Col. G.S. Dhillon to his Supreme Commander Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. "It was a flat stretch of land without any cover either from view or from fire, except a shallow dry pond near which roads of great tactical importance met.....was a hill 1423 feet high behind which the enemy Artillery was located. At a key point on this line was placed a company of Azad Hind Fauj under the Command of 2/Lt. Gian Singh, trained in the Officers Training School, Azad Hind Fauj.

"The Company was only 98 Strong. They had no machine-guns or even light machine-guns. Good old rifles were their only weapons of defence or offence apart from two A/TM mines..... Starting from early morning, hostile, fighting planes

6 Shah Nawaz Khan's deposition in the Court Martial in Red Fort.

bombarded and machinegunned their positions until about 11 a.m. Then the enemy guns from behind the hills started registering. Behind this barrage of artillery fire, advanced a column of Motorised Infantry of 13 tanks, 11 armoured cars and 10 trucks. Half of this column made its way straight towards the pond.....this would not frighten our boys. They waited in their trenches for the infantry. Tanks and armoured cars like steel monsters..... When 2/Lt. Gian Singh appreciated that their rifle fire was no match to the enemy mortars, machine-guns, light automatics and hand grenades and their staying in trenches meant certain death or captivity with no loss to the enemy, he ordered 'Charge'.

"Leading the assault, he shouted slogans of "Netaji-Ki Jai" "Inquilab Zindabad," "Azad Hindustan Zindabad" and "Chalo Dilli". All the men responded to slogans which echoed above the enemy fire. This was the only support which these heroes had against the superior armament of the enemy. In the name of India's Independence they charged into the enemy trucks..... The enemy immediately debussed; hand-to-hand fighting ensued which lasted for full two hours, but our heroes would not give in. 40 of them sacrificed their lives after killing more than their equal number of the enemy. Their unconquerable spirit harassed the enemy so much that they started retreating. Just then 2/Lt. Gian Singh called forward his 3rd Platoon Commander 2/Lt. Ram Singh and was giving orders when a bullet struck his head and he fell down never to give orders again...

"2/Lt. Gian Singh Bisht used to tell his men that he would die with them. He fulfilled his promises and remained their comrade in life and in death. This was a glorious deed of which history will remain witness as long as there is world..... In *FREE INDIA* the spirit of these heroes who knew no defeat will be worshipped for generations to come and will inspire the future sons of India to live up to such high ideals.

Sd. G.S. Dhillon, Lt. Col.
Dated the 9th April, 1945.
Commander 801 Unit."

On July 4, 1944, Netaji Subhas made a speech in Burma, the parallel of which is perhaps not known. While reminding his earlier demand of "Total Mobilisation" and satisfactory response he received thereby, he now demanded of blood. He stressed that, he had redeemed his pledge by giving a "Second Front." But "men, money and materials can not by themselves bring victory or freedom. We must have the motive-power that will inspire us to brave deeds and heroic exploits". In the concluding lines of his speech, he said:

'We should have but one desire to-day—the desire to die so that India may live—the desire to face a martyr's death, so that the path to freedom may be paved with the martyr's blood. Friends! My comrades in the War of Liberation. To-day I demand of you one thing above all. I demand of your Blood. It is blood alone that can avenge the blood that the enemy has split. It is blood alone can that pay price of freedom. Give me blood and I promise you freedom.'⁸

On his message to Gandhiji on July 6, '44, what Netaji said, is an evidence of the exceedingly great heart he had possessed. "The Provisional Government has, as its one objective, the liberation of India from the British Yoke, through an armed struggle. Once our enemies are expelled from India, peace and order is established, the mission of the Provisional Government will be over. The only reward that we desire for our efforts, for our suffering and for our sacrifice is the freedom of our motherland. There are many among us who would like to retire from the political field, once India is free. Nobody would be more happy than ourselves, if by any chance our countrymen at home should succeed.....or if by any chance the British Government accepts your 'Quit India' Resolution and gives effect to it..... Troops of the Azad Hind Fauj are now fighting bravely on the soil of India, and in spite of all difficulty and hardship they are pushing forward slowly and steadily.....

'Father of our Nation! In this holy war of India's liberation we ask for your blessings and good wishes.'

8 Speech given at a mass rally of the Indians in Burma on July 4, 1944—*Netaji, His Life and Work*: Ed. S.R. Sharma-p. 296.

BESIEGE OF IMPHAL

The Imphal war between the Indo-Japanese and the Anglo-American-Chinese forces occupies a significant place and position in the history of the Second World War. Japan displayed a great show of its valour and sacrifice, though, ultimate defeat was in store for it. The other side, with Lord Mountbatten at the command, in spite of initial crises, exhibited certain strategy, which had never been experienced before. In the midst of these two Imperial powers and among the veterans of war of Britain, America and Japan, the part played by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and his Indian National Army, is to be studied in the context of the psychology and the mentality of the time as well as the historical events.

Netaji appointed Major General Mohammad Zaman Kiani as the Divisional Commander of his 1st Division to lead the assault on Imphal. The pincer attack of the I.N.A. with as many as 8 of its columns was strategically marvellous. 2 of the 3 I.N.A. Divisions had then no transport provisions and many battalions with no modern and sufficient equipments. In fact, Netaji expected to secure the 'Churchill Supply'—the large war materials of the Allied Army when the enemy in Imphal would be captured. It was a master plan with all its ingredients. The appalling condition, the Anglo-American forces then passing through, supports this proposition. The critical situation—the besiege of Imphal had but compelled the enemy to try for rations and supply provisions from the plains of Assam area—and all the routes were then blocked and occupied by the I.N.A. and the Japanese Army.

General Sir William Slim, Commanding the 14th Army of the British Regiment, admitted in his memoirs that "the Allied Commanders were dreading an attack on Dimapur in Assam virtually undefended as it was at the beginning of April." According to him, "if the Commander of the Japanese 31st. Division had left a 'detachment to mask Kohima, and, with the rest of his Division, thrust violently on Dimapur the result would have been a staggering blow to the 14th Army." When asked to comment on Slim's account, Lt. General Mutaguchi submitted, *inter alia*, "My original plan submitted to the Singapore command...was rejected.

The 31st Division was specially instructed to clear Kohima of the enemy and converge on to Imphal: Well, had Sato (Commanding General of the 31st Division) been a more flexible and imaginative man, he might have done what Slim dreaded, when he saw British troops stampeding in terror and panic towards Dimapur...we at Maymyo or Singapore simply failed to imagine that Dimapur was undefended."⁹

Lord Wavell, the Viceroy of India has recorded in his Diary: "...they had cut the road from Imphal to Kohima leading to the railway at Dimapur, were threatening to break through at Kohima and to cut the railway itself, and had hemmed into a narrow area around the town of Imphal the three British-Indian Divisions that were originally holding this front and a fourth that was flown in as a reinforcement from Arakan. For many weeks the position was critical..."¹⁰.

The British position in India was really critical, and Comilla, the then Command Headquarters in the North Eastern frontier warned about the situation. Wavell, his Army Chiefs and the European Officials hurried to make a plan of 'disciplined and orderly evacuation' so that, the blunders of Indonesia, Malaya, Singapore and Burma were not to be repeated. Right from Calcutta to Bombay, secret arrangements were completed for evacuating European officers and civilians and all the white military personnel... Railway trains and transport were meticulously earmarked. Temporary accommodation was reserved family-wise and regiment-wise in Fortwilliam, in other fortresses and cantonments and in major cities..... Secret orders were issued to demolish or destroy everything of military value to the enemy from the borders of Burma to Bombay, including factories, ammunition dumps and stores..."¹¹. But inspite of the greatest secrecy of the 'Operation Arrow' (the evacuation programme), it was leaked out making the people alarmed. It disclosed that, the preparation for resistance to 'Delhi March' was only a cover for insuring a safe and orderly evacuation by the British.

The Officers of the Gandhi Brigade and Subhas Brigade of the I.N.A. thrust heavily. They created terror in the rank and file of

9 *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*: Bose/Werth/Ayer pp. 206-207.

10 Wavell the Viceroy's Journal: p. 61

11 S.N. Sohni: *The Lid Off* (Allied Publishers, Calcutta 1971)-p. 179

the Allied Army. They besieged Imphal with 1,65,000 enemy troops, and the latter had now but one alternative—to surrender, or to fight back to the wall, provided there was Air-borne supply of rations and ammunitions. Mountbatten had his Waterloo.

The rations of the armed forces of the Allies were cut to 50 per cent so as to defend themselves against the I.N.A.—Japanese allied force, at least for 25 days. Lt. General J.W. Stilwell, the Chief of Staff to Chiang Kaishek, then Commander of the US—Chinese forces in India and Burma, met Mountbatten in the front. Mountbatten flew to Delhi, signalled London and Washington, and procured 30 Dakotas from China. But, the situation was much aggravated. 1700 British troops with Col. Wingate (Killed in the aircrash), had been buried in Imphal. General Slim pressed for 100 Bombers, and Churchill and Roosevelt had to deploy as good as 79 planes from Normandy in Italy and place them at the disposal of Mountbatten in Imphal. Thus, the courage the spirit and presence of mind, Mountbatten displayed in distress, saved them for two years more, from the dismemberment of the Empire, that his forefathers had founded two centuries ago.

The I.N.A. had then no Air-umbrella. The British Air Force, from the rear of the Indo-Japanese barricades, supplied the War-provisions of every dimension, all air-borne. During the sieze of 80 days, Manipur was shut from the rest of the world. Under the Command of Air Vice-Marshal Vincent Stanely, 221 Group R.A.F. with Squadrons and with 20 U.S.A. Commando flying 758 sorties for continuous 10 days, passed the ordeal of the siege. Japan, by that time, lost 250 out of 300 Air crafts, their total strength in the Burma front and had nothing to give cover.¹²

12 "For the first time in the annals of history
A whole division-horse, food and guns

.....
Had been moved by air all of big dimensions.
1,65,000 was the ration strength of IV Corps
Bigger than peace time British Army's force
55,000 of these were non combatant strength
They had all to be evacuated at length

.....
Only air transport was the main life—line"
S. Gourhari Singh: *Manipur and World War II*: p. 95

Daily requirement of the Allies, entrapped in the Imphal garrison, was 540 tons of supplies and 250 men as reinforcement to replace those who lost their life in the hand of Japanese and the I.N.A. One and a half crore of rations, eighty lakh gallons of petroleum, and fifteen hundred tons of animal food for the war-mules had been air-dropped. Besides, with the help of a Secret Supply measure, 'Operation Thursday' as it was coded, they transhifted from long distant Losai aerodrome, nine thousand soldiers, two hundred and fifty tons of armaments, cannonades each weighing five hundred pounds, bulldozer and even rail-bridges for canals—all air-borne. And for carrying all these materials to the hill tops, an army of 1500 mules was air-dropped again, whereas the I.N.A. men, all carried their arms and ammunition on their back.

From the 'Flying Fortresses', the British' Allies attacked Indo-Japanese forces and played their part both offensive and defensive.

The Burmese and Indians were highly susceptible to the effects of enemy air power. 'Only Subhas Bose', observes Japanese Foreign Ministry, 'was unshaken. Perhaps even God would recognise that his faith sprang from the depth of his soul... The enemy sent men and materials to it's defensive forces passing over our encircling armies near Imphal at great speed by air. Looking up these planes with bloodless eyes our soldiers clenched their fist in desperate hatred. In this way such places near Imphal which had no defences at all at the beginning of the war were gradually fortified by the enemy'.

Even with this, Mountbatten dreaded Netaji's charisma so much so that he placed his 3rd Indian Division face to face with the I.N.A. It was Indian only in name. In reality, the 3rd Indian Division of the British Army which had 24 Battalions in the forward area, had mostly the English, Nigerian and even Burmese soldiers, but no Indians, as Mountbatten apprehended that they would leave the British side and join the I.N.A.¹³ When the head of the Japanese War Council announced a halt to the Imphal offensive, Netaji, nevertheless, even with his sympathy with this, wanted to keep

13 Debesh Das, ICS: An article (Bengali)—'Netajir Rana-Niti Sesh Paryanta Jitechhe' (Netaji's War Strategy Finally Victorious)

I.N.A. troops near the Indian border and announced that his forces would not withdraw further south to Mandalay. The stern reality, of course, did not correspond with his aspirations.

With their superior Air Force—it's deployment from Italy and China, and several divisions of Army from North Africa and the Middle East, British-American-Chinese allies fought the Indo-Japanese resulting in the retreat by the latter. But they had to accept defeats in the hand of the Indian National Army at Kohima, Dimapur, Moirang and Kalewa sectors. Mr. Steward Gelder,¹⁴ the brave English journalist reported from the front:

'.....Bottles of scotch and beer cans lay
littered along with hundreds of
bodies of Scottish Highlanders
and U.S. negros..... .''

Japanese forces, even with their great valour, but with dearth of supply provision in food, medicine, had to retreat and they retreated first. The Azad Hind Fauj, with their gallant resistance, gave in too, some time later. In his Special Order of the Day on 14th of August, 1944, Netaji announced only suspension of the assault of a tactical withdrawal. The Anglo-American armed forces were better equipped, but, he said, 'we defeated them in every battle. Our units, with their better training and discipline, and unshakable determination to do or die on the path of India's freedom, soon established their superiority over the enemy, whose morale deteriorated with each defeat... The British at Imphal had only just been saved by the rains. With their blood and sacrifice, these heroes (officers and men of the I.N.A.) have established traditions which the future soldiers of free India will have to uphold..... For securing a more favourable defensive position, it was considered advisable to withdraw our troops... As soon as all our preparations are complete, we shall launch a mighty offensive against our enemies once again'.¹⁵

14 Steward Gelder, Reporter of the *London Time* was stationed at Chungking during the Second World War. His despatches from the front area of the Imphal battle exposed the despotic and tyrannical activities of the British Army in the area effecting his expulsion.

15 'Special Order of the Day on the Withdrawal from Imphal'—Burma, August 14, 1944.

Netaji might have known the reason of debacle at Imphal: the Japanese failure to supply and maintain the I.N.A., their faults in observing a cohesion in the battlefield, and the failure to arouse in training the full-fledged nationalist fervour in the I.N.A. by the Officers resulting in the desertion of a good number of them. The failure of Imphal campaign on the part of Japan caused consternation in their politics, and General Tojo was replaced by General Koiso on October 9, 1944. On invitation of the new Prime Minister Koiso, Netaji paid a visit to Tokyo in December 1944, with Major General A.C. Chatterjee and Major General M.Z. Kiani. There was a clear understanding: 'The I.N.A. would not be subject to the Japanese military code of law, but to it's own, even in respect of offences against the Japanese Army..... Bose's army now numbered about 33,000, some 16,900 in Burma, 13,750 in Malaya and 2,000 staffing the recruit training camps, whose capacity was 15,000. The Japanese accordingly agreed to strengths of 35,000 under arms, for whom they would pay and 15,000 in training, for whom Bose would continue to provide. ... In future only the staple rations—rice, sugar, dhal—were to come from the Japanese. Bose's supply organisation would provide the meat, fish and vegetable...' ¹⁶

Netaji offered a sum of 50 million Yens to Japan to meet the expenses of manufacturing armaments for the army and navy as a symbol of the unity of the two nations in the joint struggle. This gesture is a real proof of his unshakable resolution as was evident in his offer of aeroplanes in the same year prior to the commencement of Imphal Operations. It may be presumed that Netaji had prior knowledge of Japan's weakness in air power. He spoke in the Imperial University in Tokyo, and in his long broadcasts, he addressed to the people of China, India, Japan and U.S.A. Towards the U.S.A. his was in a qualified term and in serious defence of himself and of the new Asian awakening that was being fostered by Japan. He pointed out that he was having the Japanese assistance on account of the failure of that of America before the War to help in achieving India's National independence. He emphasised that Burma and Malaya did not.

16 Hugh Toye: *Springing Tiger*—p. 140.

'I want to tell my American friends that Asia is now surging with revolutionary fervour from one end to the other..... We are men as you are. We want our freedom and we shall have it by any means. You had an opportunity of helping us, but you did not do so. Now Japan is offering us help and we have reason to trust her sincerity...It is not Japan that we are helping by waging war on you and on our mortal enemy—England. We are helping ourselves—We are helping Asia...'

The Tokyo University speech proves the vastness of Netaji as a political seer. In it, he accepted Gandhiji's leadership and pinpointed his differences with him—the quarrel of non-violence and armed revolution. He reiterated, India must be industrialised so that only advanced in science and technology, India could obtain her modern army necessary for her defence, and to this end, she must open herself to foreign co-operation. He also delineated the National Planning to be achieved—after defence, the fight against poverty and illiteracy. A Socialist State, powerful enough to carry out quick and drastic reforms, "that will work...as the servant of the masses and not of a clique". Free India would combine the required principles of National Socialism and Communism—the planned economy. But it should not escape our eyes that, Netaji, now no longer laid stress upon a new party to support the authoritarian Government because he had by this time realised that the struggle in India was in tune with the interest of her people. And with regard to India's foreign policy to be followed by India, he advocated internationalism based on common interests and culture.

Netaji refused the highest honour of Japan the 'Order of First Merit of the Rising Sun', as he humbly refused in the case of Shibuzawa's presents,¹⁷ saying that he would be happy to accept it when the day of India's independence would arrive. The revelation of the very essence of his character! Before he left

17 During the Greater East Asia Conference in 1943, the Japanese Government received Netaji as a national guest and he was put up in the house of Shibuzawako Shakuro. When a Japanese sword and other presents were given to him out of deep respect and affection of the Shibuzawas, he said that he would keep all those presents in the same house and would come again to receive them after India attained independence.

for Rangoon for the next assault, he seemed to have realised that Japanese defeat was not far off. So, before his trip to Tokyo, when Yamamoto of Hikari Kikan, and Vice-Admiral Kan-ei-Chudo asked him in July 1944, if he did not personally think it better if an attack was made by him from the west and he should proceed to Samarkhand in Central Asia to continue his struggle in co-operation with Soviet Union (U.S.S.R. then had a non-aggression pact with Japan). Netaji was quite receptive. He then constantly sought an interview with the Russian Ambassador to Japan. But the Tokyo—authorities rejected the proposal. It transpired, Netaji contacted secretly with the Vietnamese Army officials under Ho-Chi-Min and ventured to go to U.S.S.R. after Japan's surrender.

Netaji believed that the alliance between Russia and the Anglo-American allies would not outlast the War in Europe and Russia might be willing to extend her co-operation to him. In the context of these developments, his actions from then onwards may be studied with the precaution it deserves. To pour out his entire strength to the last drop of his blood on the cause of Mother India, was the only thought that occupied him. He left Tokyo and flew to return to the distressing bloody battle front of Burma.

It finally resolved itself into a seize, in which the British allies, with their supplies assured, managed to keep up their defensive positions against the I.N.A. forces. But the rains came up, and what the enemy could not do, the monsoons succeeded in effecting. The Indian National Army was forced to retrace their steps through the No-Man's land of Indo-Burma border. "Hungry and foodsores, with their encampments," says John Thivy, "supplies, transport, arms and ammunitions, washed away by suddenly appearing torrential streams dashing down hill side and flooding up valleys, the Indian National Army trudged its painful way back to bases in Burma. When they turned their back to India, there was no enemy following them. The outbreak of the monsoons was the sole cause of this forced retreat."

The Garhwalis among the Azad Hind Fauj and inhabitants of the hills, "advised us", tells Major Abid Hasan of the retreating

force, "what roots to eat and which herbs and leaves. The roots and leaves gave us diarrhoea and we blamed the Garhwalis for our woe. They resented our ingratitude and left us to fend for ourselves. We had to placate them before they again offered their nourishing advice..... An army, it is said, marched on its stomach but we marched, sustained only by a great desire and a great longing. Chased by the enemy, open to attacks from the air and menaced by the guerillas, even the medical aid we had consisted of our lone doctor with the few medicines he could carry on his back. He too suffered as we did and later developed typhoid and he had to be carried by us in turns all the way". The statements as furnished above by two I.N.A. personnel are evidenced by Gerard Corr, the British author of *The War of the Springing Tigers*: "Buoyed up by the idea of marching into India, the men set out in reasonable spirits. After the terrible weeks of forced marches through heavy rains they reached the vicinity of Kohima early in June They were living off little more than dry fried rice and grass..... The Japanese fought with supreme courage and tenacity but even they could not fight without supplies; and now that the monsoon had broken, conditions had become all but impossible For a further eighty days, the men of the I.N.A. and the Yamamoto Detachment stayed in the Palel area. They received no rations or ammunition supplies. Many died of starvation....."¹⁸

The legend that all the Gurkhas were loyal to the British, gave lie to it when quite a good deal of them deserted the Imperial Army and voluntarily joined I.N.A. In 1944, a group of them were despatched to the Imphal battle-front for reconnaissance duties there. From Imphal they were sent on to Kohima. As they arrived, the preparation for retreat from the sector was in action, and many of them carried on an epic march to Nepal covering about 6,000 miles over the hills and jungles.

Surrender was not enjoined on them, the I.N.A. men knew the war was lost, but, there was the promise of a battle. "The Words spoken in Rangoon", states Major Hasan, "in the Special Order of the Day of 24th of April, 1945, kept ringing in our ears: 'In Imphal and Burma, we have suffered a reverse in the first round

18 Gerard H. Corr: *The War of the Springing Tigers*—pp. 162-163.

in our fight for independence. But it is only the first round. We have many more rounds to fight. I am a born optimist and I shall not admit defeat under any circumstances'. These words gave us the courage, the hope and the purpose to march on. We had the possibility of shaping our destiny and we would not miss the next round.....Ours was a grim resolve. We knew the odds against us. After all, we were the men from Imphal".¹⁹

Both the Japanese and the I.N.A. lost their power of endurance and defensive capacity very first. Netaji stationed himself in Rangoon in early 1945, exposing himself as before to the enemy bombardment day in and day out leading troops and managing the affairs of the Government. He was eager for the participation by his 2nd Division of the I.N.A., in the victories to come as still planned. The 1st, 2nd, and the 4th Guerrilla Regiments were ordered to move. The Japanese troops now rushed from Yenangyaung to defend the enemy attack in Meiktila and to destroy the enemy attempt of crossing the river Irrawaddy, a strategic point. Lt. Col. P.K. Sahgal, the Regimental Commander of the 2nd I.N.A. Infantry Regiment rushed to Mount Popa, a 5,000-feet high isolated steep mountain for patrolling the river banks. The Japanese Commander of the 72nd. Independent Mixed Brigade met Col. Sahgal and guaranteed him fire support from their artillery.

By this time, Netaji made his far flung Secret Service project to penetrate into the enemy operation zone by way of infiltrating wireless agents. They were in the position to sabotage the American pipeline in North Burma. It is a significant facet of the war is that the demoralising tendencies like the defeat, retreat or desertion should not be allowed to touch the troops or spread among those who are away. And in the case of Imphal campaign, it is important to take note that notwithstanding the disastrous consequences of retreating, most of the people in other fronts, and particularly in Rangoon, there had been a spectacular celebration of Netaji Week, commencing on and from Netaji's birth day on 23rd January, 1945. ".....Somewhat to his distaste, he had been weighed against gold (one and half time his weight), over twenty million rupees had

19 Abid Hasan Safrani: *The Men from Imphal*—pp. 2-3.

been collected, and a company of young men and women had pledged themselves in blood to form a suicide squad in his service...exhortations to the 2nd Infantry Regiment as it left for the front and the promotion of four of his officers to be the first Indian Major-Generals on the 'Army Day', February 4th."

With regard to 'Netaji Day' in Rangoon, and the activities of the Indian residents thereof, the following statement of Ms. Protima Ghosh, a housewife will give the readers a clear picture of the state of things reflecting the mood and action of the civilians:

"My parents and I came in touch with Netaji in Rangoon. We were at that time living in Bauktaw—a suburb of Rangoon. We felt what a great and wonderful work Netaji was engaged on..... The most important thing was to collect funds for Netaji's movement. We went from door to door, to distant places by pony cart or walking, where Indians lived in colonies, to collect cash and kind...Another important work was to provide entertainment for troops of the I.N.A. Men and women of all sections from our Indian community took part enthusiastically. We also organised classes for children to teach them patriotic songs and acquaint them with what was going on in the mother country. In our house, Captain Ram Singh and his party participated daily with his full band.

"I also recall a very special occasion when we decided that on Netaji's birthday we would weigh him against gold and present it to him for his cause. Every Indian—rich or poor, came forward with great enthusiasm and donated whatever gold, jewellery they had, and our objective was fulfilled. The presentation was held one morning in the City Hall in Rangoon—seven silver trays laden with gold and jewellery were offered to him by girls and ladies—I took up the second tray and it was a very proud moment for me, and something which I shall remember all my life.

"My father, late Satish Chandra Ganguly, worked closely with Netaji and worked in the Information Department of the Azad Hind Headquarters... My mother was very good in preparing sweets, and whenever Netaji needed sweets and other delicacies for entertaining guests or troops—the order would

come to us and we really enjoyed preparing them. Once we prepared snacks for 500 troops..... We tried to attend every meeting that Netaji addressed and all the people sat spell bound for two hours or more listening to him—so inspired were they by his words that we were ready to lay down our lives for our country. When Shri Rash Behari Bose came to Rangoon for the first time, the first meeting was held at night in our house at Bauktaw. The Indian Independence League was founded in Burma—and I was given the work of propagating in English to women audience. After my father's death, I gave regular broadcasts in English from Azad Hind Radio. My late husband Bimalendu Ghosh, an Engineer in Rangoon, was awarded 'Sevak-e-Hind' by Azad Hind Government for the service rendered to I.N.A. movement. After the War, our family was put to extreme harrassment month after month. I was in Burma throughout the war and stayed there till 1966, coming to Calcutta in March, 1966."

Elated and with renewed confidence, Netaji, inspected the veterans of the Imphal War at Pynmana, and pressed on to Meiktila with Major General Shah Nawaz Khan. It has been seen, the reorganised 15th Division of the Japanese Army was ordered to oppose the British along with Irrawady river. And now Netaji, with all enthusiasm, offered his First Division of I.N.A. for support of the 15th Division. At Meiktila, the Japanese were all in confusion. The British forces, the IV Corps of Mountbatten, began landing at Akyab, Burma. This place had a special significance for Netaji, for his original plan was to launch his military assault from Akyab via Chittagong.

In this juncture, Netaji left Rangoon on 18th Feb, 1945, for inspecting the situation by himself in the forward area. His actions on this occasion, as an army leader, shows up his real character in good light which requires intense study both in its subjective and objective consideration. A retinue of Indian and Japanese Generals was in his accompaniment, and Col. Takahashi, one of them observes:

'...After the departure, Bose himself took over the command of allotting trucks and duties to various persons who accompanied him. The next evening we reached Pynmana. Here

Bose invited the leader of the Indian community of the area and enquired in detail from him about the living condition..... Then he met the leader of the women's army unit of that area and had breakfast with her. In the afternoon, he inspected the 1st Division of the I.N.A. which was also stationed in that place. (M.Z. Kiani, the Divisional Commander, was then under excessive strain.) Bose was looking after all details as he inspected the troops. Thus he continued his work day after day without any rest..... Avoiding roads he would not enter any house during the day. He would, as a rule, fix his hammock to trees and take rest while reading a book. I came to know later that he was reading the history of Irish Independence in those days.

'...Bose argued that it was exactly in such bad situations that the Supreme Commander should stand by the side of the man and he refused to budge from his position... Since the enemy in the northern parts of Meiktila became very active, Bose was advised that he should withdraw. But as usual he was obstinate... With Bose on a horse-drawn cart and the rest of the party on foot, we started to withdraw. When the cart which Bose had occupied was about to enter the village, enemy planes started to bomb the area and the bombing continued for twenty to thirty minutes...

'The morning after our arrival, Bose called on the Commander of the I.N.A. in that area and also Lt. Col. Takahashi... After the reports of reconnaissance were analysed he expressed his ideas thus;

"...I have been reading the history of the independence of Ireland since we left yesterday. Though all the determined fighters of that freedom struggle were killed, their spirit continued to live seventy or eighty years..... I am greatly inspired by that example. If the present situation continues it is difficult for Burma also to foresee its future. Therefore, here at this place I shall fight leading the 1st Division and die. Being sure that the spirit of independence will live among Indians, I shall wage the last decisive battle here..."²⁰

20 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Japan—*Netaji and India's Freedom*: pp. 406-407.

The Japanese Commanding General and Major General Kiani were of the opinion that the situation in respect of both time and place must be quite different. But Netaji's resolution was very firm for his life and death had transcended the beautiful and he had attained the supreme realisation. He would not listen to anything that might be perilous. In the conference that followed for several days, he took an oath from Major General Kiani that the latter would defend the front allotted to him until death, and only then returned to Rangoon. Netaji had gone on inspecting troops throughout the day without any rest and would never sleep for more than three to four hours. He ordered the Rani of Jhansi Regiment of the I.N.A. to return to Rangoon. He himself would personally go and order for the change or repairing of the defective parts of the vehicles, in which members of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment had moved.

Netaji knew beforehand that enemy planes were patrolling the roads through the day time, and that in many places bridges were smashed up, so that, it would mean long night route marches. Yet he chose to share the dangers, trials and privations with the rest of the troops. Those who had the excellent fortune to be with him during 21 days that took the party to reach Bangkok conceived an insight into the qualities of mind and heart of the Great man, under whose leadership the Indians in East Asia gladly toiled and died for the cause of India. During the march, sometimes he would come out to offer his own food to the Japanese soldiers. This was entirely an unknown and unconceived of experience for the Japanese Officers to observe the Supreme Commander of an Army in such a noble sublime form. Here, perhaps Netaji's genius, demonstrated best in this trying time. He could very well have left Burma by aeroplane after giving necessary orders for proper evacuation of the others, but his way of doing things was his own.

The greatest blow to India's Army of Liberation came when it came to light that their opposing Army was mainly composed of Indians. Occasions had been there, when members of the British Indian Army, moved by the noble work the I.N.A. was doing, came over to I.N.A. with the intention of fighting shoulder to shoulder with their brothers in the Azad Hind. Many of them did so, but some others seeing the conditions under which the

Liberation Army was fighting, could not muster the needed spirit and determination to sacrifice their position of comfort and plenty in the British Army. They came in their tens and thousands fully equipped with high powered Air-Cover above them. And the time at last arrived when the seat of Azad Hind Government had to be moved from Rangoon to Bangkok. Rangoon was in the tender care and administration of the Indian National Army since the British had evacuated in 1942.

Now, the British advance was sharp. It was discovered that, Lt. Hari Ram deserted to the enemy. Netaji at once despatched Shah Nawaz with a communique to Major G.S. Dhillon: "I have heard with grief, pain and shame of the treachery shown by Lieutenant Hari Ram and others. I hope that the men of the 4th Regiment will wash away the blot on the I.N.A. with their blood". These, in real measure, had been the grievances, the pains, the crucial circumstances that burnt the heart of the great leader. This seemed to him the real defeat. Still, it is evident, how closely he had under control, of the authority against those deserters.

He wrote to a military police officer of the I.N.A. in Mandalay:

"According to my information the men who recently deserted from Mandalay.....are still in Mandalay area. These men must be arrested and sent down to Rangoon under escort. If you can not arrest them, they must be shot at sight....."

Netaji, the Supreme Commander of the Army and Head of the Azad Hind Government resolved to go in person to Mount Popa, the bleeding, the fearful battle front. It was crystal clear to him that the Japanese Army would not hold Burma long. He disregarded the danger involved and his only wish was to die fighting the enemy of India. He had promised, he would lead the I.N.A. to victory or death. If the march to Delhi was over for the time being, his Army must create the legend of heroism and determination, and his countrymen would be inspired to raise the banner of revolution again in the sacred soil of India. Lives are an insignificant price to pay a dazzling shining tradition. In the small hours of the moonlit night of February 26, 1945, the Supreme Commander was found arguing with his Officers on

the line of reporting himself to the forwarding front, and only at a little distance, the horizon in the west being discerned, at intervals, against the flash of gunfire and bombardment. Major General Shah Nawaz, who was present at the spot, lost his patience, gave vent to his anxieties:

'You are proposing to risk your life just to show your personal courage; but this is selfishness and you have no right to do it; your life is not your own, it is a precious trust for India, held in our keeping; we are responsible.' Netaji was determined. Though with a mild tone, he remarked, 'You have no need to worry, England has not made a bomb that can kill me.'²¹

For the great and intrinsic value of the episode itself, as well as for the thrilling experience of the students of history, this writer feels indulged to give the pen-picture of the scene—Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, weapons in hand, was ready for war action. Heavy air raids had been there on the previous day and also in the early hours of the 26th February. The Japanese Liaison Officer came and reported that a British Armoured column was only sixteen miles off, and they had nothing to stop it driving on to Meiktila. Shah Nawaz describes:

'I...filled up the car with grenades and ammunition.....when, we entered the car and started of (at about 9 A.M.) Netaji was sitting with a loaded Tommy gun in his lap. Raju' (Dr. Col. Raju, personal physician to Netaji).had two hand grenades ready. The Japanese officer was holding another Tommy gun and I had a loaded Bren..... We were all ready to open fire instantaneously. The Japanese officer stood on the foot-board to the car to be on the lookout for enemy aircraft'.²²

There were many alarms, the sky was full of enemy planes, and the nearby villages were full of British spies. But no danger they had encountered and driven as many as twenty miles to Yindaw without any incident.

There were a number of small actions by the I.N.A. during March, 1945. Dhillon's regiment had heavy casualties and his battalion commanders deserted, but it would make no difference. He proclaimed, "We will sacrifice our lives to

21 Shah Nawaz: *My Memoires of the I.N.A. and its Netuji*.-p. 144.

22 Shah Nawaz: *My Memoires of the I.N.A. and its Netaji*-pp. 146.

maintain the honour of the I.N.A. Some NCOs in the 2nd Infantry Regiment under Col. P.K. Sahgal, deserted and he said, 'Everybody appeared to feel that the enemy had full information about our disposition...' In the face of enemy attack with tanks and armoured cars and infantry with strong artillery, Sahgal ordered counter-attacks, one after another but failed as many company commanders and men surrendered. He withdrew and retreated. The 14th Army of Mountbatten with its immense strength drove through Burma, but not all of the I.N.A. ranks and files gave in without fight. Captain Bagri and about a hundred men under his command perished in a last desperate charge with only hand grenades and bottles of petrol against the British tanks. In the middle part of May, 1945, Major General Shah Nawaz, Col. G.S. Dhillon surrendered at Pegu. "It was impossible for General Bhonsle," reported Special War Correspondent of *The Hindustan Times*, "to persuade them (I.N.A. soldiers) to surrender to the British forces when they came".

Major General Loganathan was to preside over the I.N.A. surrender in Rangoon. Netaji, while leaving Rangoon in the company of three Major Generals and prominent members of his Government said in his Special Order, that he addressed the members of the I.N.A.: 'Go down as heroes, go down upholding the highest code of honour and discipline... I have the fullest confidence that the spirit can never be crushed. For the sake of India's Freedom, I beseech you to keep up that spirit, I beseech you to hold your heads erect, and wait for that Blessed Day... I do not leave Burma on my own free will. I would have preferred to stay on here and share with you the sorrow of temporary defeat. But on the pressing advice of my ministers and high ranking officers I have to leave Burma in order to continue the struggle for India's liberation..... I have always said that the darkest hour precedes the dawn. We are now passing through the darkest hour: therefore, the dawn is not far off. India shall be Free.'²³

The United States of America dropped two Atom Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan on August 6-9, 1945. And

23 Special Message On Leaving Burma dt. 24.03.1945.

Japan gave in; with her, Netaji had but no alternative. He now wanted to move his armies into the mainland of China at first, and to move the Provisional Government to a zone where it would be convenient to have contacts with Russia. Around August 10, on scrutiny of all reports and in the fast changing war situation, their national peril, Japan conveyed their position of surrender and asking Major General Bhonsle, the then head of the I.N.A. War Council for emergency preparations. Netaji conferred with his Cabinet, with his War Council for long three days and nights. Being insisted by one and all of the Government and War Department of the Azad Hind, he finally decided to leave Singapore. He sent an appeal to the Japanese Government. "Along with the trusted persons of my Cabinet I would like to go to the Soviet Union. If it is necessary, I shall enter the Soviet Union alone. In that case, I request the Japanese Government to allow any of my Cabinet members to take charge".²⁴

Field Marshal Count Terauchi of the Southern Army, even on the face of opposition of his Imperial Headquarters, to honour Netaji's wishes to go to U.S.S.R., was determined on his own responsibility to arrange a flight for Netaji from Saïgon to Manchuria in the same plane which took Lt. General Shidei, who was already scheduled for transfer to the same place, i.e. Manchuria. It was a great and daring action on the part of the Terauchi, the C-in-C of the Japanese Southern Command. This plane was to fly to the capital of Manchuria and Netaji Bose to bale out close to the Russian Armies which were marching south towards Dairen. Netaji boarded the Bomber on August 17, 1945.

Mr. S.A. Ayer, the Minister of Propaganda of the I.N.A. Government, writes : "But where was Netaji going ? We did not ask him and he did not tell us. But we knew and he knew that we knew. The plane was bound for Manchuria."²⁵

24 *Netaji And India's Freedom: Proceedings of the International Netaji Seminar 1973: Subhas Chandra Bose And Japan* — p. 415.

25 S.A. Ayer : *Unto Him A Witness*—p. 69.

VII

Finale

IN THE SPECIAL Order of Netaji Bose's last message to the officers and men of the I.N.A., this passage occurs: "Friends! In our struggle for the freedom of our motherland, a crisis which had never been dreamt of has befallen us.....But I would say it is only a temporary failure. No failure and no defeat can wipe out our earlier solid achievements. Many of our comrades have laid down their lives on the battlefield and have become immortal martyrs of Azad Hind. This great sacrifice can never go waste.

".....Now, in this moment of temporary defeat, it is your duty to maintain your faith firm and determination strong.....Friends! I am conscious of the fact that, at this critical time, the 38 crores of people living in our motherland are looking towards us, the soldiers of the Indian liberation army. Be, therefore, true to India. Let not your faith in India's destiny be shaken. There are many roads to Delhi. And Delhi is still our goal...There is no power on earth which can keep India in bondage. India will certainly be free and, that too, soon. Jai Hind."¹

We have studied, how, due to lack of Air-power and on account of nature's onslaught, the valiant troops of the Indian National Army had to withdraw from Burma, from the battlefronts of Kohima and Imphal. About 26 thousand heroes of I.N.A. laid down their lives, and with them, 65 thousand Japanese troops and 60 thousand British-American and British-Indian Officers and men.² Their blood, that of the

1 Special Order of the Day on August 17, 1945, to the I.N.A., translated from Tamil version published in *Swatantra India*, Singapore—*Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandru Bose*, Publications Division, Government of India.

2 Sheel Bhadra Yajee: "*I.N.A. and its Netaji's Role in the Freedom Struggle of India*" (paper in the National Seminar on Netaji and I.N.A. on 22.10.85 at I.N.A. Memorial, (Moirang, Imphal)

Indians and of their compatriots, that was shed in confirmation of the noblest claim on the mountains and jungles of Burma and Manipur, did not go waste. It is true, the sword that was unsheathed, could not defeat the mighty enemy in the battle field, but in a magnificent process of history, it penetrated deep into the battlements of the Red Fort of Delhi, still then in occupation of British Imperialists.

Major General S.C. Alagappan of the I.N.A., writes: "On 5th September, 1945 the British Indian occupation forces took charge of Singapore and put our camp within barbed wire, where I continued as a prisoner looking after the men of the I.N.A. and about 300 of our patients. About a month later, a batch of Sailors of the R.I.N. (Royal Indian Navy) came to see me in the evening. While discussing with them, they told me that they were going to restart the movement as soon as they returned to Bombay. I knew they had belonged to H.M.I.S. (His Majesty's Indian Ship) TALWAR. Within a fortnight I learnt through some Indian papers that these sailors had incited mutiny on their ship, in Bombay and Karachi...On 1st January, 1946 I was flown under escort to New Delhi and lodged in the Red Fort along with my old colleagues who were awaiting trial by Court Martial."

After the fall of Japan, the 'B-21 Combined Operation' squad of the Royal Indian Navy was sent to Singapore and other parts to reoccupy the British territories in the East Indies. The Indian navy men, who had no knowledge of the I.N.A. and its heroic war against the Anglo-American allied forces, for the first time came in contact with the exploits of India's National Army and its Supreme Commander. They had been highly inspired with great national spirit, with all out sacrifice of the historic action of the I.N.A. and the Provisional Government for the liberation of India. Young sailors of the Royal Indian Navy—the most sensitive armed wing of the British Indian Army fraternised the I.N.A. troops and returned to Indian ships and naval establishments at Bombay, Karachi, Madras with revolutionary change in their heart. They smuggled to the mainland of India photos, films, scripts, news paper-cuttings and lot of valuable informations about I.N.A.'s battle against the Allied Armies. This writer has had the thrilling experiences of meeting and

interviewing some of the leaders and men of naval revolt of the R.I.N.³

When the British forces landed in Malaya and Singapore to reoccupy the former British positions and capture the I.N.A. regiments, the people in the regions were not all terrified, instead, they exhibited their hatred most. "Nobody spoke with them (British Indian troops), no shopkeeper sold any thing", observes Capt.(Dr.) P.S.Sangha, eye witness. "The general public of Malaya called them traitors and told them that they were slaves themselves and that they had again made Malayees and their own I.N.A. brethren slaves." The captain further narrates: "Over and above, 21 October 1945 came as usual, was celebrated as Azad Hind Government Day and Indian National Flag was hoisted on top of every shop and house. The British Indian Army personnel were wonder-struck to see all that...On learning the truth about the I.N.A. the British Indian Army also started itching for India's independence. The effects of the I.N.A. was so deep that at the time of arranging Victory Parade, the allies were forced to hoist the Indian National Flag also along with the National Flags of the victorious big five powers—U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Britain, France and China. The Indian National Flag was sent for from the I.N.A. Headquarters at Ipoh (Malaya) and I was an eye witness to all that."⁴

Although Netaji was a born leader with a magnetic, a charismatic personality, he was not a military genius like Napoleon Bonaparte. But even Napoleon with his Grand Army, was overcome by circumstances and compelled to submit to

3 The author has obtained the recorded interview with the following mutineers of the Royal Indian Navy of 1946:

Sunil Banerjee No. 36170-Jellico Division posted on 'H.M.I.S. BAHADUR' (Karachi). He participated in the gun fire in the Naval Revolt. When India attained freedom and when he was awarded Freedom Fighter's pension, he refused the same on the ground that he did not accept the official view of Non-violence to be the cause of India's Independence.

Biswanath Bose—'Able Seaman', stationed in 'H.M.I.S. FIROJ'. He was one of the organising members of the Naval Mutiny and posted in the Gunnery for action in the Mutiny. He was included in the 'B-21 Combined Operation' despatched to East Indies.

4 Dr. P.S. Sangha, Captain, I.N.A.— '*Netaji, I.N.A. and Free India*'—article published in '*Netaji and India Today: 75th Birth day Souvenir*' of the Azad Hind Fauj Association, Delhi-6; p.70.

much inferior men like Wellington and Blucher. So when Netaji Bose embarked on the Imphal Operation, which he conceived in 1943 but acted upon in April 1944, he was really cherishing a forlorn hope. He said to the troops of the National Army that, he could but offer them 'nothing except hunger, thirst, privation, forced marches and death', but if they follow him, he would lead them to victory and freedom. Yet, as fully fitted to a great Commander whom millions loved and worshipped, Netaji lost neither hope nor courage. It was he, who wanted to fight till the last and again agreed on July 8, 1944 to halt actions and retreat. Knowing that to stick on under the conditions would mean nothing less than total annihilation he had issued orders for retreat of the I.N.A. and the Japanese themselves could no longer hold Burma. He flew to Bangkok and thence to Dairen enroute Taihaku. He had already sensed growing differences among the victorious Governments—U.S.A. and U.K. on the one hand and U.S.S.R. on the other. This difference surfaced during the Japanese surrender and little earlier at the San Francisco Conference of April-June, 1945. Netaji desired to take the advantage of most of these differences, for utilising them in the cause of Indian independence. With this aim in view, he decided to have his asylum in U.S.S.R. And history is yet to say anything positive about his death or having remaining alive.

Two historical references, it is irresistible for the writer but to place on record, are:

1. WAVELL THE VICEROY'S JOURNAL: Page No. 178 (August 24, 1945)—'I wonder if the Japanese announcement of Subhas Chandra Bose's death in an air-crash is true, I suspect it very much, it is just what would be given out if he meant to go underground. My first reaction when I heard it was to tell P.S.V. to ask S.E.A.C. to make most careful inquiries into the story as soon as they could. If it is true, it will be a great relief. His disposal would have presented a most difficult problem.'
2. THE TRANSFER OF POWER 1942—47, Volume VI: Pages 138-140 Enclosure to No.574

TOP SECRET HOME DEPARTMENT.....

3. As regard the treatment of Bose, there are the following possibilities:
 - a. bring him back to India and try him either for waging war or under the Enemy Agents' Ordinance;
 - b. have him tried by a Court in Burma or Malaya or waging war against the king in that country;
 - c. have him tried by a military court outside India;
 - d. intern him in India;
 - e. intern him in some other British possession, e.g. Seychelles Islands;
 - f. leave him where he is and don't ask for his surrender.
4. I do not think that there is any chance of Bose being hanged if he were tried in India. The pressure for his release would be too great; also his trial would result in great publicity for his doings, motives, etc. On the other hand, trial in India would be the straightforward course.....If it is accepted that execution would, in the end, be impossible then reprieve him immediately after conviction, to forestall agitation, would be the best course.
5. It is extremely unlikely that the Government of Burma, which is engaged in appeasing the Burma National Army would agree to try Bose..... His Majesty's Government agreed to ignore agitation in Singapore would cause almost as much agitation in this country as a trial here, unless it were held in Camera and no news released till after his execution. But in that case we would be accused of judicial murder.....Also what reason could be given for trying Bose outside India when the leaders of the I.N.A. are to be tried openly in India? The long-term political consequences of this course might be very serious.
6. Trial and execution by a military court outside India would be open to similar objection but to a less degree, as the trial would presumably be less prolonged and military punishments are expected to be more severe than civil ones...On the other hand this would be an obvious subterfuge and it is unlikely that the military would lend themselves to it.

7. Interning Bose in India would lead only to an agitation to let him out and to his release after a short time. He might then escape to Russia as he did in 1940.....
8. There is no more to be said for detention and internment somewhere out of India. Out of sight would be to some extent out of mind and agitation for his release might be less. Also escape to Russia would be difficult.
9. On many ways the easiest course would be to leave him where he is and not ask for his release. He might, of course, in certain circumstances be welcomed by Russians. This course would raise few immediate political difficulties, but the security authorities consider that in certain circumstances his presence in Russia would be so dangerous as to rule it out altogether.
10. The choice seems to be between deporting and interning Bose outside India or trying him in India and commuting the death sentence.....

R.F.MUDIE,—23.08.1945

Home Member

The above matter is a note to the Enclosure No. 57 on the treatment of Netaji, in 'Response to His Excellency's request'. It was done by Sir Evan Jenkins, Private Secretary to Lord Wavell, the viceroy, submitted to Sir F. Mudie, the Home Member. The note and recommendation as detailed above, was communicated to London on 23rd August whereas the alleged death of Netaji Bose in an Air-Crash on 18th August was announced from Domei Agency in Tokyo on 23rd August—all in 1945. The British Cabinet in its meeting on 25th October 1945, with Premier Mr. Attlee in the Chair, agreed to the note and recommendation in the clauses 1 to 10, as stated above.⁵

5 The document of the Cabinet meeting is marked "168. CABINET—India and Burma Committee, I.B. (45) 6th Meeting. Those present at this Meeting held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.1. on 25 October, 1945 at 12 noon were: Mr. Attlee (in the Chair), Sir Stafford Cripps, Lord Pethick—Lawrence, Miss Ellen Wilkinson, the Earl of Listowel. Also present were: Mr. G.H. Hall, Mr. A. Henderson; Mr. E.A. Armstrong and Mr. J.P. Gibson (Secretariat)"

More than three decades later, only in 1978, India's High Commissioner in Britain, made a public comment of absorbing attention: "NEW TURN IN CONTROVERSY OVER NETAJI'S FATE—VIENNA: The Indian high Commissioner in Britain, Mr.N.G. Goray, yesterday introduced a new element into the controversy surrounding the fate of Netaji by pointing out that a "top secret" note of the Government of India, written within a week of the reported air crash had contemplated the possibility of bringing back Netaji for trial.....Mr. Goray, who was speaking at a weekend seminar, hastened to add that he was not suggesting that "Subhas Babu was alive" but whether alive or dead, the Indian people would like to know what had happened to one of their foremost leaders—did he die in the crash or spend the rest of his life in some prison."⁶ And the rest is silence, and to break it, if perhaps, only the "SECRET PAPERS"⁷ in Moscow unveil it in future.

Let us now pass on to the nature of the moving drama leading to the climax. Netaji did not return, but what he had envisioned, was attained. He gave India an Army, it was Indian, it was national and independent. The soldiers of this National Army were arrested and tried and declared guilty for waging war against the King—Emperor of England. But there was not a single soul who dared to touch a hair of the head of any one of

6 *The Statesman*: 12.04.1978.

7 The writer communicated to Mr. Yegor Yakovlev, the Editor-in-Chief of the Moscow News on August 10, 1990, and Dr. E.S.Yurlova of the Soviet Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow in April 1991 with reference to the news in *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, March 5, 1990, which published: "Secret Papers" ON NETAJI IN USSR THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT POSSESSES CERTAIN SECRET DOCUMENTS WHICH MAY SHED NEW LIGHT ON NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE. D.R.E.S. YURLOVA OF THE SOVIET INSTITUTE TOLD.....TWO SOVIET SCHOLARS, WHO HAD BEEN WORKING ON THE INDIAN LEADER, HAD APPLIED TO THE GOVERNMENT FOR PERMISSION TO EXAMINE THE DOCUMENTS. THE DOCUMENTS WERE CATEGORISED AS "TOP SECRET" AND HAD NEVER BEEN MADE ACCESSIBLE....." Dr.Yurlova of the soviet Institute answered to the writer on May 20th 1991: "AND WHO KNOWS, MAY BE THE HISTORIANS WOULD COME ACROSS NEW MATERIALS. I ALSO MENTIONED TWO HISTORIANS' NAMES—DR. T.DEVYATKINA AND DR. A.RAYKOV, THREE INSTALMENTS IN "SOVIET LAND" OF HIS COMING BOOK ON S.C. BOSE PUBLISHED IN 1990/1991. BUT SO FAR NO NEW MATERIAL HAS BEEN SPOTTED.....S.D.E.YURLOVA."

them. And from this most eventful character of the history, dawned Free India. Let us examine how this could happen.

As there could be no question of trying and executing twentyfive thousand I.N.A. Officers and men, the British authorities in India decided to hold the Court Martial of three I.N.A. Officers—one Hindu and one Muslim and the other one, a Sikh. The Court was held at the Red Fort of Delhi—Red Fort because, in the slogans of the I.N.A., the Fort had been the spot where the Tricolour of the new India was to be hoisted. "The choice of scene was taken as a deliberate taunt, an insolent and provocative act of triumph over vanquished", observes Mr. Philip Mason; "that was the error of judgement". Mason, the then Joint Secretary, Government of India, War department further says, "the policy was announced to press—I drafted the communique myself—and it met at first with gratified approval, even from the Congress leaders.....But within a few weeks all this was changed. In a wave of nationalist emotion the I.N.A. were acclaimed heroes who had fought for the freedom of India....."⁸ Michael Edwardes has characterised the I.N.A. Court Martial as, "the last display of ineptness by the British administration in India, the final proof—if at this stage such proof was needed—that the Services who ruled India has, like the Bourbons,* forgotten nothing and learned nothing...the Labour Government knew as little about the realities of India as its predecessors had done."

The Government in Delhi had a testing time during the period under study. The left-wing extremists in Congress had been threatening to launch a fresh 'Quit India' movement, the tone of the Nationalist Press was more virulent. The Government "faced with the issue of another violent suppression of Congress, with weaker and rather demoralised forces perhaps, if their intimidation of officials and police continues being unchecked and they succeed in dividing the I.A. (India Army) over the I.N.A. trials, or of capitulation to them."

Lord Wavell recorded on November 3, 1945: "Our propaganda and publicity over the I.N.A. was fatally slow and ineffective, and that we have given Congress a weapon which

8 'Foreword written by Philip Mason in the book *Springing Tiger* by Hugh Toye.

they have been not slow to use, and very unscrupulously." On the November 5, the day of the opening of the Court Martial of the I.N.A., the Viceroy sent a note of warning to His Majesty's Government in London on the following form:

"We are now faced in India with a situation of great difficulty and danger, in which I require support and guidance from his Majesty's Government.....I saw Nehru on 3rd November, and pointed out to him the danger of the course he and other leaders were advocating. He made it clear that he thought violence inevitable...I believe that the Congress are counting on the I.N.A. as the spear-head of their revolt; they would suborn the Indian Army if they could, and they hope that their threats will impair the loyalty and efficiency of the Police.....I must accordingly, with the utmost gravity, warn H.M.G. to be prepared for a serious attempt by the Congress, probably next spring, but quite possibly earlier, to subvert by force the present administration in India....."⁹

The I.N.A. and its glorious activities which hitherto regarded as a 'Military Secret' were now exploded, and the entire socio-political atmosphere of the Indian Sub-continent became surcharged with a conflagration of national fervour. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, a member of the Defence Committee of the Congress for the I.N.A. said, "...it would be a very grave mistake leading to far-reaching consequences if they are treated just as ordinary rebels. The punishment given to them would in effect be a punishment to all India and Indians." Afterwards he wrote, "The trial dramatized...old contest: England versus India. It became in reality not merely a question of law...but rather a trial of strength between the will of the Indian people and the will of those who held power in India."

Mr. Bhulabhai Desai who headed the group of eminent lawyers including Sir Tej Bhadur Saprú, Dr. Kailashnath Katju and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, fought the case for I.N.A. with the armaments of International Law, Indian Penal Code, the Army Act and the I.N.A. Act. The provisions of the Azad Hind Government and its status, as provided in it's Constitution by Netaji, now bore fruits. The British authorities did not and could not shoot the I.N.A. Prisoners of War at the spots, as unduly

9 Wavell The Viceroy's Journal: pp.180-183.

thought to be justified by the Secretary of War, also on grounds of stern retaliation announced by Netaji on 30 May 1945, which reads inter alia: 'Vindictive and brutal treatment is being meted out to Officers and men of the Azad Hind Fauj who have been captured by the Anglo-Americans in Burma...it may be that the British think that we are not in a position to retaliate, and that they can, therefore, do what they like with our Officers and men. But I would like to warn the British Authorities that this is not the case...before we are forced to think of retaliatory measures, there is one remedy open to us. If our countrymen at home take up this matter and carry on a raging and tearing campaign inside India, I am absolutely sure that the British Authorities will be brought to their senses. Members of the Azad Hind Fauj are honest patriots and revolutionaries fighting for freedom of their Motherland. They are, therefore, entitled to decent treatment during captivity, in accordance with international usage and convention'.

How powerful the plea was, and how prophetic and specific the assessment of the situation might have been ! 22 heroes of the I.N.A. had then been executed by the time the Court Martial at the Red Fort had its formal opening. But neither the Military Commanders in the Burma fronts, or at Singapore or in the East Indies—the spots of the capture of I.N.A. nor their highest authority in the War Ministry in London, dared to take any graver action. "I appeal to my countrymen at home", announced Netaji, (included in the said warning)"to take up the cause of their own Prisoners of War", and India took up the cause, and turned into a volcano which shook the Imperial throne with the velocity of tornado. It was from within the Court room of the Red Fort and outside as well. And it broke all the boundaries of political, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and of armed wings for what Netaji and Indian National Army had done to liberate India against the most mighty military powers. The British could read the writing on the wall.

The Court-Martial of the I.N.A. was constituted with Advocate General Sir N.P. Engineer and Major Walls besides Major General A.B. Blackland, Brigadier Herk, Colonel C.R. Scott. The Advocate General of India in his opening address of the prosecution case said:

List of Heroes of the Indian National Army who were executed

Serial No.	Name	Indian Army Rank	Indian Army Unit	Rank	I.N.A. Unit	Date of trial	Charges on which convicted	Home Address	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Chattar Singh	Sepoy	5/8 P.R.	-	-	14.6.44	Waging War against King	-	Executed in Delhi Jail on 29-7-1944
2	Nazir Singh	Sepoy	8 Burma Rif.	-	-	15.6.44	-do-	V.Bhori	Executed in Delhi Jail on 25.8.1944
3	Durga Mal	Hav.	2/1 Gurkha Rif.	Capt.	Special Squad	5.7.44	-do-	Khanna, P.O. Dharamsala	Executed in Delhi Jail on 25.8.1944
4	Hazara Singh	L/Nk.	5/2 P.R.	Hav.	-	25.8.44	-do-	V.Jhan Gilana Distt.	Executed in Red Fort on 25.10.1944
5	Sardara Singh	Fitter	I.A.O.C.	-	S.S. Group	6.10.44	-do-	Hoshiarpur V & P.O.	Executed in Bhopalwala Calcutta on 23.3.1945
6	Naginder Singh	Nk.	8 Burma Rif.	Hav.	Bahadur Group	3.7.43	Desertion	Distt. Sialkot V. Ramgarh P.O. Sidhwan Ludhiana.	Executed on 28.8.43
7	Keshri Chand Sharma	Jem.	R.I.A.S.C.	-	-	13.12.44	Waging War against King	-	Executed in Delhi Jail on 3.5.1945
8	Charan Singh	L/Nk.	8 Burma Rif.	-	-	6.7.43	-do-	V & P.O. Sarawan Distt. Jullundur	Executed in Multan Jail on 28.8.1943
9	Dal Bhadur Thapa	Jem.	2/1 Gurkha Rif.	Capt.	Reinf. Group	12.2.45	-do-	Bara Kothi Dharamsala Cantt	Executed in Delhi Jail on 3.5.45

Serial No.	Name	Indian Army		I.N.A.		Home Address	Remarks
		Rank	Unit	Rank	Unit		
10	Dalbara Singh	-	-	Capt.	-	-	Hanged in Delhi Jail on 3.5.1945
11	Chanan Singh	Hav.	1/8 P.R.	-	Bahadur Cp.	-	Caught and Hanged (Charged of infiltration).
12	S.C. Bardhan	-	-	-	-	Bitghar, Dt. Tipperah, Bengal	Hanged on 10.9.1943 in Madras
13	Gurcharan Singh	-	-	Priv.	-	-	Hanged in Delhi by the British.
14	Pritam Singh	Policeman in Malaya	-	-	-	V & P.O. Hiran Distt. Ludhiana.	Court martialled and Shot by British
15	T.P. Kumaran	Civilian	-	I/C Intelligence Br. Ind. Swaraj Institute	-	V. Nelligod, P.O. Puthiyara S. Malabar.	Indian Government. Hanged by the British.
16	Khoder	-	-	-	-	Kadevil House, P.O. Anchigore, Travancore.	Hanged by Govt. of India
17	Kartar Singh	-	-	Sep.	1 Engr. Coy.	Di. Sheikhpura.	Hanged in Sialkot Jail on 4.12.45.
18	Mohd. Abdul Kader	-	-	-	S.S. Group	V. Vayahpurayidan Vakkam 10	Executed in Madras on 10.9.1943
19	Ramu Thaver	Civilian	-	S.S. Group	-	Anjined, Quilon V. Thumpadakkhai Kottai, P.O. Rajasinglam, Dt. Ramnad Tamil Nadu.	Executed on July 7, 1944

Serial No.	Name	Indian Army Rank	Indian Army Unit	Rank	I.N.A. Unit	Home Address	Remarks
20	Ramasami Ondunyar	Civilian	-	S.S. Group		V. Tirumangalak Kottavidile, P.O. Vadaseri Mannugudi, Dt. Tanjore, Tamil Nadu.	Landed in India, was caught and hanged
21	Ajaib Singh			S.S. Group		Kalha, Dt. Amritsar.	Hanged in Red Fort, Delhi.
22	Zahur Ahmed					V. Jahur Mukhlilan, P.O. Sangla Hill, Sheikhpura.	Hanged on 23.8.1943.

"The Charges against the accused are under Section 41 of the Indian Army Act. All of them are charged with 'Waging War against H.M.King-Emperor of India contrary to Section 121 of the I.P.C.(Charge I).'' Lt. Dhillon is charged with the murders of Hari Singh, Dulichand, Daryao Singh and Dharam Singh on March 6, 1945, contrary to Section 302 I.P.C. (Charges 2,4,6, and 8). "Captain Sahgal is charged with abetting the said murders contrary to Section 109 and 302 I.P.C (Charges 3,5,7 and 9). Captain Shah Nawaz Khan is charged with abetting the murder of Mohd. Husain on March 29, 1945, contrary to Sections 109 and 302, I.P.C. (Charges 10). The accused are all Indian Commissioned Officers and as such they are subject to the Indian Army Act...The motive with which the war is waged is immaterial. The offence in question is committed against the duty of allegiance. This allegiance the accused owed to the Crown at times and in all circumstances...The accused waged war against H.M.King as officers of and by fighting in what was called the Indian National Army..."

The British Prosecutor, in his conclusion submitted "...if accused seek to rely upon any general or special exception or upon any proviso in the Indian Penal Code, the burden of proving the existence of circumstances bringing the case within such exception or proviso is under Section 105 of the Indian Evidence Act upon the accused and the court will presume the absence of such circumstances."¹⁰

All the three I.N.A. Officers emphatically answered 'not guilty' to all the charges.

Shah Nawaz Khan deposed: "Bred in traditions of loyalty to the British Crown I had known India only through the eyes of young British officers. When I met Netaji and heard his speeches for the first time in my life I saw India through the eyes of an Indian. When with my own eyes I saw the enthusiasm of thousands of poverty-stricken Indians in the Far East who gave to the I.N.A. all that they possessed and whole families joined the Azad Hind Fauj and became 'faquirs' for the sake of

10 Kusum Nair: *The story of I.N.A.* :Chapter VI, 'IN THE RED FORT' pp.34-Padma Publication Ltd., (Kusum Nair, the Editor of the National Press Syndicate Published *The Story of the I.N.A.* when the verdict to the Court Martial at Red Fort just announced in 1946)

their country I knew we had a real leader.....I joined the second I.N.A. in February, 1943, on being told that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose would be coming to Singapore to take over its command. In Netaji I found a leader and decided to follow him. And for me it was the greatest and the most difficult decision of my life—of fighting against my kith and kin, who were in the British Indian Army in very large numbers and whom I was certain I could never induce to see eye with me.....On the other hand, when I thought of the starving millions who were being ruthlessly exploited by the British, who were being deliberately kept illiterate and ignorant to make this exploitation easier..... I made up my mind to fight even against my brother if he stood in my way and in the actual fight that followed in 1944, we actually fought against each other. He was wounded.....the question before me was the King or the country. I decided to be loyal to my country and gave my word of honour to Netaji that I would sacrifice myself for her sake.....and for long periods we had to live on paddy and jungle grass when even salt was a luxury for us. During this period we marched over 3,000 miles in Burma." Shah Nawaz concluded his statement before the Judges of the Military Court: "I wish to bring to your notice and to the notice of my countrymen that no mercenary or puppet army could have faced the hardships as the I.N.A. did. We fought only for India's Independence. I do not deny having taken part in the fight, but I did so as a member of a regular force of the Provisional Government of Free India who waged war for the liberation of their country according to the rules of civilised warfare."

The prosecution witnesses were Lieut. D.C. Nag, the author of the I.N.A. Act., Capt. Dhargalkar and Subedar Major Babu Ram, Jamadar Altaf Raza and Naik Santosh Singh. Of the total of 27 prosecution witnesses, the high-light was the confession of Sepoy Saldullah Khan that he had been tutored what evidence to give and made to memories the dates as he was illiterate. On 30th November, 1945, the court adjourned till December 6, and again to the next day when Lt. Col. J.A. Kitson gave the story of how Lt. P.K. Sahgal surrendered. Capt. Sahgal said, "Lt. Col. Hunt, as the representative of the British, handed over the Indian Officers and men to the Japanese like a flock of

sheep.....We felt that the British Government had on its own cut off all the bonds that bound us to the British Crown, and relieved us of all obligations to it. The Japanese handed us over to Capt. Mohan Singh, who was styled as the G.O.C. of the Indian National Army”.

Captain Sahgal deposed further that after protracted discussion with regard to the situation they were in and with terrible anxieties concerning their near and dear ones in India undergoing violent torture and repression by the British authorities in the ‘Quit India’ movement, the only solution before them was the formation of a strong and disciplined armed force which should march into India and liberate the motherland. Capt. Sahgal claimed, he was entitled to all privileges of a prisoner of war, and stressed upon the point: “Had we been told that the surrender on the terms offered by us was not acceptable to the British Commander, we were determined to fight on and were in a position to do so because, we were nearly 600 strong, fully armed and equipped and each one of us was prepared to shed the last drop of his blood for the sake of his country.”

On the charge of abetment of murder, Capt. Sahgal said that, the 4 sepoys were found guilty and sentenced to death, though, like many others who were tried, sentenced to death by the I.N.A. authorities, had been pardoned on their expressing regret and giving assurance of future good behaviour. He emphasised, even if the death sentence would be carried out, the four sepoys of I.N.A. having deserted while in action and in the face of the enemy, had committed an offence punishable with death under the I.N.A. Act and under the Military law all over the world.

Lieut. G.S. Dhillon deposed last. He referred to the motto as engraved in the Chetwood Hall in the Indian Military Academy at Dehra Dun: “The honour, welfare and safety of your country comes first, always and every time. The comfort, safety and welfare of the men you command comes next. Your own safety and comfort comes last, always, and every time.....I got to realise the full significance of the havoc done to my unfortunate country by one and a half century of British rule. While the British, I thought to myself, had exploited all our material

resources for their own benefit and had freely drawn upon our manpower to fight for their own imperialist war, they had not only done nothing to prepare us for the defence of our motherland in case of need, but had in order to keep us in bondage for all time to come, completely emasculated us. In the Indian National Army I saw a new hope for India.....Mother India seemed to be calling me and I decided to respond to her call and threw my lot with Mohan Singh.....Many a time I had to go without water for 20 to 30 hours and without food for two or three days. If as a Brigade Commander-I had to undergo these hardships, my men must have suffered much more and yet they accompanied me. No men who had joined under duress or coercion could have done so."

Regarding the charge of murder or abetting it, he admitted that four men had been committed by him for trial on charges of and attempting to communicate with the enemy. He said, "It is, however, quite untrue that those men were shot at my instance or under my orders. On the day and at the time they are said to have been shot I was confined to bed and unable to move. In fact the sentence of death passed on these men were subsequently remitted by the Divisional Commander and they were never executed. Whatever I did, I did as a member of a regularly organised force, fighting under the Provisional Government of Free India and I am, therefore, not liable to be charged with or tried under the Indian Army Act and the Criminal Law of India for any offence on account of any act done by me in the discharge of my duties as a member of such a force. I am further advised that in the point of law my trial by court martial is illegal....."

In an atmosphere tense with great expectation, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, the Chief Defence Counsel delivered his concluding address on 17th December 1945. It lasted for ten hours:

"Substantially there is really one charge before the Court, because in so far as the charge of murder and abetment of murder is concerned it is part of the first charge. I say so, for the reason that it would be quite possible in the case of charge of Waging War against the King to be able to charge every single act of firing a shot, which would, I think be 'reductio ad

absurdum.'.....Generally a Court martial decides cases of individual offences. I venture to say—and the evidence supports it that this is not a case of three individuals waging war against the king..... those three men charged before you are part of an organised army, who waged war against the King, according to the prosecution.

“What is on trial before the Court now is the right to wage war with immunity, on the part of a subject race for their liberation. I shall be able to cite accepted authorities on International Law, that a Nation or a part of a Nation, does reach a stage, where it is entitled to wage war for its liberation. The first conclusion of fact, which I ask this Court to accept is that the Provisional Government of Free India was formally established and proclaimed.”

The Chief Counsel of I.N.A. Defence read out the Proclamation of the Azad Hind Government which declared that it would be the task of the Provisional Government to launch and conduct the struggle that would bring about the expulsion of the British and their Allies from the soil of India. He put up a magnificent and stirring defence. He submitted that the Azad Hind Government had the international recognition, it had an Army, its own distinctive badges and emblems and functioned under regularly appointed officers. It was also established that the Government of Japan ceded to new India State of Azad Hind the islands of Andamans and Nicobar besides its acquired territory of Ziwadi, and that the Government functioned for four to six months, Vishenpur area in Manipur covering some 1,500 square miles. It was also evidenced in Malaya alone 2,30,000 persons had taken the written Oath of Allegiance to the Provisional Government.

Mr. Desai, the Chief Counsel for I.N.A., produced a document which had not been put as an evidence, but he submitted, the Court should take judicial notice. It was about a published article in a weekly magazine in London called ‘Stamp Collecting’. The Counsel read out at which quoted the journal’s correspondent, British Flying Officer T.A. Broomhead saying, he had seen proof of impression of Special Issue of stamps for use in Imphal having two denominations namely, three pice plum

and one anna red, seemed to have been prepared. It is also known that, the subject of the ornamental design on the postage was that of the Mughal fortress at Old Delhi, accompanied by the slogan "On to Delhi" with bilingual inscription read, "Provisional Government of Free India"¹¹. The new Indian State of Azad Hind had a Civil and an Army Gazette of its own. He contended that when two States declared war any acts done during the prosecution of that war were outside the jurisdiction of municipal law.

So grand and powerful the argument put forward by Mr. Desai was, as he addressed the judges themselves of the Court Martial directly: "If you gentlemen in the due prosecution of war committed murder, could the civil laws as propounded by the other side be put into operation against you.....?" With reference to the modern ethics of International Law all over the world, he said, "this is not politics, it is law—any war made for the purpose of liberating oneself from foreign yoke is completely justified.....it is unnecessary in order to constitute a war that both parties should be acknowledged as independent nations or sovereign states.....a war may certainly exist between a state and its suzerain as in the Boer War (Wheaton's International Law)." He further recalled 'Magna Carta' of the history of England and the Civil War in the history of American War of Independence, and quoted President Grant of America, who said on June 13, 1870:

"The question of belligerency is one of the facts, not to be decided by sympathies for or prejudices against either party. The relations between the parent state and the insurgents must amount, in fact, to war in the sense of international law." The Chief Counsel of I.N.A. pointedly urged upon the Judges, "Please remember that you are here as Judges. You are not politicians, I agree, and I do not want you to be such. If you find that there is a "de facto" political organisation sufficient in character and sufficient in resources to declare war with an organised army, your verdict must be in favour of these

11 *The Trial-General Court Martial Red Fort, Delhi*: p. 150. Government of India, 1946

men—on more and no less than the verdict on your own men, for killing others, of which act you are justly proud.”¹²

Mr. Desai's submission under Rule 24 of the Rules of Conduct of Trials before this Court Martial was that the joint trial of the three accused was completely illegal. And thus ended the Red Fort Trials in the Military Court in New Delhi with its unique features and historic repercussions in the history of India and of Britain. The Court Martial sentenced the three Officers of the I.N.A. to transportation for life! History, perhaps, repeated, when Sir Claud Auchinleck, the then British Commander-in-Chief in India, remitted the sentence and set them free honourably. For once the Indian nation had the cause to rejoice in the dramatic anti-climax. “The net result of the trial was that”, says Lieut. K.V. Chandran of I.N.A., “it established a new chapter in International Law that freedom is one's birth right and every one has his inherent right to revolt against the authority to achieve this basic human right. On the basis of this great principle, the heroes of India's War of Independence were released unconditionally with honour and dignity.....We established our status in the world as the authors of the biggest armed revolutionary freedom struggle the world has ever witnessed. All the I.N.A. personnel all over South East Asia were released.”¹³

It will be incomplete to conclude the saga of the Indian National Army, unless it is stated that besides the Court Martial in the Red Fort, there had been many more Court Martials and Civil Courts in different parts of Indian mainland and outside. The National Congress constituted a delegation of leading lawyers and sent to Singapore to defend the civilian personnel of the I.N.A., imprisoned there. This body of lawyers, among others, included Shri R. Venkataraman, His Excellency, the former President of India, Shri Bashyam Iyengar, Shri Narimen and Shri Sapru (Junior). The released civil I.N.A. personnel returned to their respective places of residence in Rangoon, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Penang etc. and rehabilitated themselves, and some of them returned to India.

¹² Ibid p. 155.

¹³ Tamil Nadu I.N.A. Forum, Thanjavur, Netaji 93rd Birthday Souvenir—p. 29.

One of the most fascinating aspects of this history should be incorporated here for the academic interest of the readers. It is this: "Their first meeting (Nehru and Mountbatten) was interesting, because it was profoundly ironical. If Nirad C. Chaudhury is to be believed (article 'Subhas Chandra Bose—His Legacy and Legend' in *Pacific Affairs*), when Subhas Chandra Bose marched towards India as the head of the I.N.A., Nehru proposed to go out and fight this army of fascists and save India for democracy, and it was Mountbatten who as Supreme Commander of South-East Asia beat the I.N.A. back. Yet the two first met when Nehru had gone to Malaya to unveil a memorial to the Indian National Army in February 1946 and Lord and Lady Mountbatten were his hosts. Here to 'everyone's surprise; writes Dorothy Norman, 'Lord Mountbatten declared that he would escort Nehru to the memorial meeting for the I.N.A.' Mountbatten and Nehru marching together to an I.N.A. memorial¹⁴ was a sight for the gods to see."¹⁵ Maj General Shah Nawaz while placing wreaths on the site of the demolished monument and was highly distressed to comment that Mountbatten's accompaniment with Nehru to the memorial site as an instance of the British hypocrisy of the lowest level.

It may also be recalled that "Panditji did place a wreath at the spot in the presence of many I.N.A. personnel at a small private function. Many of them including me were eye-witnesses to this function," says Lt. K.V. Chandran I.N.A., General Secretary of Tamilnadu I.N.A. Forum. The Lieutenant further observes, "But Lord Mountbatten in his memoirs wrote that he succeeded in dissuading Panditji when he visited Singapore in placing a wreath.....At a later date when Dr. S. Gopal was writing the Biography of Nehruji, he wanted to refute this statement.....invited Lt. K.V. Chandran who gave a written, signed statement with some photographs and the same was published in one of the volumes of the Biography of Nehru."¹⁶

14 The I.N.A. Memorial at Singapore was constructed by Col. C.J. Stracey, Staff Officer of Maj. G.I. M.Z. Kiani the foundation of this memorial was laid by Netaji in July 1945. The British force razed the martyrs' column to the ground with dynamite.

15 S.C. Sen Gupta: *India Wrests Freedom*: p. 305

16 Tamil Nadu I.N.A. Forum: p. 30

Here again there is controversy between Dorothy Norman's statement about Mountbatten's escorting Nehru to I.N.A. memorial meeting and Mountbatten having dissuaded Panditji in placing wreath. And again why was it a 'Private' function as pointed out by Lt. K.V. Chandran, one may question. It is up to the future historians to find out. In all probability, Dorothy Norman was mistaken.

The logistics of the I.N.A. in action were awe-inspiring. It had to operate under ever increasing difficulties and against fearful odds—they fought against the forces of one of the greatest Generals of the War-Field Marshal Sir William Slim. After the lapse of 25 years since, Col. G.S. Dhillon expressed, "What was our strength? Undoubtedly, Netaji's personality was our greatest strength which could sustain.....I asked him that as war appeared to have been lost to us and to our Allies and we had little hope of taking over the offensive again, what exactly was left for us to fight or what were we fighting for. Netaji's reply was quick, 'To pay the price of India's liberty.'

The saga of the I.N.A. is a legend in itself. It's historical evidence shows that never in long history of man and war did a group of people in exile, rose an army so gigantic in form to liberate their country from foreign rule. It was entirely due to the Indians overseas that the Provisional Government of Free India could attain the status of duly organised and belligerent a Government, enjoying the allegiance of millions of people. These Indians comprised the State with Indian Independence League as the Executive of that State and the I.N.A. as it's Army of Liberation. The boys, girls recruited from amongst the Bengal, Madras and Orissa community proved themselves equal to their counterparts from Punjabi, Jat, Dogra and Gorkha communities. The armed fights of Imphal, Kohima and Akyab and other places opened a new chapter in India's history, rather revived the courage and prowess, tenacity and conviction on the part of India's men and women.

Lt. Col Lakshmi Swaminathan had observed: "Young Indian women from all parts of East Asia besieged the recruitment centres. Overnight, they were able to cast off their shackles and enter into a completely new life.....There were some elderly

women who volunteered as camp cooks (Jhansi Regiment Training Camp) and these women at their own instance, trained to handle rifles expertly. They were prepared to move to the front and always carried rifles, as they said they did not want to be caught unawares by the enemy.....the Rani of Jhansi Regiment was turned out as smartly and efficiently as any crack Infantry Regiment.....shared one feeling, and that was the intense pride of having the proud privilege and rare honour of being soldiers in Netaji's Army of Liberation. Although began as a detachment, one company strong, every day new recruits joined until finally there were one thousand trained women soldiers.....It was difficult to imagine to that these stalwarts, upright, brisk women were once fragile, delicate, ill-nourished Indian women who had responded to the call of Netaji.....It was from these members of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment that even the British came to realise that the I.N.A. was no puppet army formed of handful of ex-P.O.W.'s but a mighty force of Indians who were ready to undergo trials in order to liberate their motherland."¹⁷

Even the boys and girls had formed the formidable 'Bal Sena' which was not just a juvenile social unit but formed itself as a resourceful organisation in taking up the charges of strategical lines of supplies, communication and transport. These boys and girls of the age group of 11 to 16 joined I.N.A. War, as full-fledged combatants and added a glorious chapter by revealing the potentialities of India's manhood. It is even to-day, and for the posterity to recollect that when four million men, women and children (though an underestimate) in Bengal alone—home of patriots and revolutionaries—perished through a forced famine, not a single shot was fired against the British agents. And how was it possible then for the men and women in South-East Asian territories to stand straight and fight the battle and when in the very soil of India, industrialists, traders and bureaucrats amassed wealth and power at the time of the British swan song, those, their brethren in East Asia, gave their all at the clarion call of Netaji. It is in this context of moral

17 Lt. Col. Lakshmi Swaminathan: *Origin-Netaji, His Life and work*—S.R. Sharma, pp. 196-205.

victory, spiritual reawakening and national consciousness, that the sense of total sacrifice became the guiding force, and inculcation of the same spirit is the need of the hour of India to-day again.

Lord Attlee, the Prime Minister of Britain spoke on 15th March 1946, that imperialism was dead as the dodo. Exhibition of Indian patriotism which the huge Indian National Army raised in a short time by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, to which, when we consider its size and heroic struggle it put up, there is probably no parallel in military history. Commander-in-Chief Auchinleck realised quite correctly that he was a helpless onlooker who could no longer control Indian members of the British Indian Army, Navy or the Air Force. And Attlee, some time after relinquishing his office as the Prime Minister of England, when came to India and stayed at the Governor House in Calcutta, in 1956, he freely admitted before Mr. P.B. Chakraborty, the then Governor and Chief Justice of West Bengal, that, it was Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and the I.N.A.,—the immediate cause of Independence but for which the transfer of power might not have been as quick and unequivocal as it was.

Thus through the ordeal of hunger, thirst, privation and forced marches, Netaji Subhas and the Indian National Army heralded the freedom of India and left it to the people to preserve and nourish it. With united stand and with robust optimism it is the people who are to keep the flag flying and march ahead. Their blood had been shed in confirmation of the noblest claim—'the claim to feed upon immortal truth, to walk with God and to be divinely free! In this world, they have their judgement day and their names can not go down with dust, like a gallant banner they shine forth.

INA Proclamations on Entering India

1944

FIRST PROCLAMATION

1. The Indian National Army, under the leadership of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, has now massed in force and advanced into a territory of Eastern India as the spearhead for the creation of a Free India.

The Indian National Army with the help and co-operation of the Imperial Nipponese Army, has pushed into Eastern India with the object of crushing the Anglo-American forces, the common enemy of East Asia, of making India really an India for Indians by liberating her from the shackles of the despotic rule under which she has been groaning for ages; of bringing complete freedom and peace and order to the three hundred and eighty millions of our brothers and sisters in India; and also of driving away the Anglo-American menace from the borders of our neighbours—the Independent Burmese.

Brothers and Sisters in India !

Be engaged in your daily work without fear; gather whole-heartedly under your Tricolour Flag of Independence hoisted by the Provisional Government of Azad Hind; brace yourselves up for winning Complete Independence by retaking our Motherland from the hands of our enemies, Anglo-Americans.

The East Indian Territory into which the Indian National Army has advanced with the powerful aid of the Imperial Nipponese Army, as well as the people thereof, have now been liberated from the bondage of the Anglo-Americans. This territory has become the first free Indian Territory on the Mainland of India under the Provisional Government and will serve as the base for liberating our Motherland. The Imperial Nipponese Army will not establish a military administration but will cooperate with and wholeheartedly help the Provisional

Government of Azad Hind in maintaining perfect peace and order.

II. If any person fails to understand the intentions of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the Indian National Army, or of our Ally, the Nipponese army, and dares to commit such acts as are itemised hereunder which would hamper the sacred task of emancipating India, he shall be executed or severely punished in accordance with the Criminal Law of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the Indian National Army or with the Martial Law of the Nipponese Army, the application of which has been agreed upon between the two allied armies, namely, the Indian National Army and its Ally, the Imperial Nipponese Army.

Punishable Acts

- (1) Rebellious acts against the Provisional Government of Azad Hind or the Indian National Army, or our Ally, the Nipponese Army.
- (2) Acts of spying.
- (3) Acts of stealing and taking by force, damaging and destroying war materials which are in the possession of the Provisional Government or belong to our Ally, the Nipponese Army.
- (4) Acts of damaging or destroying of valuable material resources controlled or utilised by the Provisional Government of Azad Hind or by the Nipponese Army under previous agreement with the Provisional Government.
- (5) Acts of destroying various installations or equipments for traffic, communication, transportation, broadcasting, etc. which are controlled or utilised by the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the Indian National Army, or by the Nipponese Army under previous agreement with the Provisional Government; or acts of interference with the employment and utilisation thereof.
- (6) Violent acts against, intimidation of killing or wounding of, or doing other harmful acts to those who belong to the

Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the Indian National Army or our Ally, the Nipponese Army.

- (7) Acts of spreading enemy propaganda or wild and false rumours, and other acts of disturbing and misleading the minds of the inhabitants.
- (8) Acts of disturbing the money circulation and economic organisation or of obstructing the production and free interchange of commodities.
- (9) Any act other than those contained in the above items, that benefits the enemy or is harmful to peace and order and the well-being of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the Indian National Army or our Ally, the Nipponese Army.
- (10) Acts of attempting instigating and abetting those acts contained in the above items.

The trial and punishment of such criminals will entirely be at the discretion of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind except when crimes committed are of such a nature as of necessity, owing to wartime emergency, must be dealt with by the Nipponese Army as agreed upon between the two Allied Armies.

III. The Nipponese Army will maintain strict discipline and protect, in the area into which they have advanced, the lives and properties of the Indian masses who do not commit any hostile act; and due respect will be paid to the religions, customs and manners of the Indian people.

It is guaranteed that any Nipponese soldier who may violate these strict injunctions shall be severely punished in accordance with the Martial Law of the Imperial Nipponese Army.

The Indian National Army will maintain strict discipline and protect, in the area into which it has advanced, the lives and properties of the Indian masses who do not commit any hostile act; and due respect will be paid to the religions, customs and manners of our countrymen.

It is guaranteed that any Indian soldier who may violate these strict injunctions shall be severely punished in accordance with the Martial Law of the Indian National Army.

The above is solemnly proclaimed in the month of April, in the year 1944, by the Supreme Commander of the Indian National Army.

SECOND PROCLAMATION — 4 APRIL, 1944

Under the leadership of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind which was formed on October 21, 1943, at Syonan (formerly Singapore) by the unanimous will of the three million Indians in East Asia, the Indian National Army has crossed the frontier and has penetrated deep into Indian territory.

The Provisional Government of Azad Hind, your own Government, has only one mission to fulfil. That mission is to expel the Anglo-American armies from the sacred soil of India by armed force and then to bring about the establishment of a permanent National Government of Azad Hind in accordance with the will of the Indian people.

The Provisional Government of Azad Hind will continue the armed struggle until the Anglo-American forces are annihilated or expelled from India.

While prosecuting the armed struggle for the complete liberation of India, the Provisional Government of Free India will push on with the work of reconstruction of the liberated areas.

The Provisional Government of Azad Hind is the only lawful Government of the Indian people. The Provisional Government calls upon the Indian people in the liberated areas to render all assistance and co-operation to the Indian National Army and to the civilian officials appointed by the Provisional Government.

The Provisional Government guarantees the safety of life and property of the Indian population in the liberated areas, but will inflict severe punishment on those who carry on any activities, overt or covert, which might be of help to our Anglo-American enemies or their allies, or might disturb the work of reconstruction to be started by the Provisional Government.

The Provisional Government calls upon the Indian people to co-operate wholeheartedly with our Ally, the Nipponese Army, who are giving unstinted and unconditional assistance in

defeating our enemies. In the last two years, the British have been strongly reinforcing themselves with troops from America, Australia, Chungking-China and East and West Africa. The Provisional Government has, therefore, felt, compelled to avail itself of the generous offer of all-out aid made by Nippon, whose armed forces have scored unparalleled victories over the Anglo-Americans since the beginning of the war in East Asia. The Provisional Government of Azad Hind is supremely confident that the Indian National Army, with the aid of the invincible forces of our Ally, the Nipponese Army, will crush the Anglo-American and bring about the complete liberation of India.

The Provisional Government is fully convinced of Nippon's sincerity towards India. The Provisional Government is convinced that Nippon has no territorial, political or military ambitions in India. The Provisional Government is convinced that Nippon is interested only in destroying the Anglo-American forces in India which are the enemies not only of India, but of Asia as well. The destruction of Anglo-American Imperialism alone will terminate this war and bring peace to the world.

In accordance with its status as an independent Government the Provisional Government of Azad Hind is arranging to issue its own currency in Rupee-Notes of different denominations. But owing to the rapid development of the war situation, culminating in our quick advance into India, it has not been possible to bring into India, in time, the currency of the Provisional Government. The circumstances have, therefore, rendered it necessary for the Provisional Government to borrow from the Nipponese Government the currency (viz. military rupee notes) already in its possession and to use that currency as a temporary measure. As soon as the Provisional Government's own currency is available, the currency borrowed from the Nipponese Government will be gradually withdrawn from circulation.

Brothers and Sisters ! Now that our enemies are being driven out of Indian soil, you are becoming once again what you were before—namely, free men and women. Rally round your own

Government—the Provisional Government of Azad Hind—and thereby help in preserving and safeguarding your newly won liberty.

4 April, 1944.

Subhas Chandra Bose,
Head of the State.

JHANDA PRARTHANA

(IN A FLAG SONG IN ROMAN SCRIPT
AND IN ENGLISH)

*Vijayi viswa tiranga pyara,
jhanda unca rahe hamara.
sada sakti sarasane-wala,
prem-sudha barasane-wala,
matr-bhumi-ka tan-man-sara,
jhanda unca rahe hamara.* (1)

*is jhande-ke nice nirbhay,
len swarajya yahavical niscay,—
bolo—"Bharat-mata-ki jay !"
swatantrata hai dhyeya hamara,
jhanda unca rahe hamara.* (2)

*swatantrata-ke bhisn ran-men,
lakhi-kar jos barhe ksan-ksan-men
kanpe satru dekh-kar man-men,—
mit jay sankat hamara—
Jhanda unca rahe hamara* (3)

*ao; pyare viro, ao—
des dharam par bali bali jao—
ek sath sab milkar gao—
"pyra Bharat-varsa hamara."
jhanda unca rahe hamara.* (4)

*is-ki san na jane pawe,
cahe jan bhale hi jaye
viswa-vijay karke dikhlawe,
tab howe pran purna hamara,
jhanda unca rahe hamara.* (5)

THE FLAG SONG

(Translated by Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji)

Victorious in the world our beloved Tri-colour,
May our banner remain high !
Ever renewing our strength,
Ever raining the nectar of love,
The soul of the body and mind of the Motherland—
May our banner remain high !
Under this flag, fearless,
Let us win Swaraj (freedom), unshaken, certain:
Say—"Victory to Mother India!"
Independence is what we have set our hearts upon.
May our banner remain High !
In the terrible fight for liberty,
Every minute by looking at it our enthusiasm grows,
In his mind the enemy trembles, seeing it:
May our troubles be ended—
May our banner remain high!
Come, dear heroes, come,
Be a sacrifice for your land and faith,¹
All together, sing this song—
"Our beloved Bharatha-varsh."
May our banner remain high!
may its glory never depart,
Our life may very well go.
We shall show, conquerring all:
And then our vow will be fulfilled.
May our banner remain high!



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